THE MODERN NOVEL

WILSON FOLLETT

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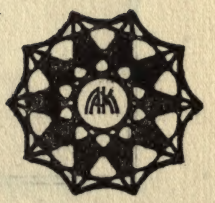
BY WILSON FOLLETT



BY HELEN THOMAS FOLLETT
and WILSON FOLLETT

SOME MODERN NOVELISTS

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THE MODERN NOVEL

A STUDY OF THE PURPOSE AND THE MEANING OF FICTION

BY
WILSON FOLLETT

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to trace the development of some important principles of fictional criticism during the two centuries of the novel in English, and to show how the development of these principles has in turn altered the shape of the modern novel. From the point of view here maintained, criticism is not only effect but also cause. Its ideas are indeed gradually evolved from what has been done, and of course from what has been poorly done or left undone; but they are with equal certainty gradually incorporated into what is being done, and this second half of the process is none the less significant for having been so largely neglected by the conventional critic and historian. Criticism is a forecast as well as a record, and a leverage for raising the standard as well as a standard held up. This endless cycle of interactions is what I have studied, in an effort to show how criticism itself is creative, and especially how both the critical and the creative forces of past generations come to focus in the latest definable stage of fiction, that of the late 19th century and the early 20th. I have tried to accomplish that purpose with a due recognition that this, or any, latest stage is itself but tentative and experimental. The novel as we have it is the past crystallizing; but,

thanks to the force of criticism and to no other force whatsoever, it is as truly the future germinating.

If the function here ascribed to criticism seem overstated, one has only to reflect how trifling a part of the whole body of criticism is comprised by its special and formal embodiments in reviews, essays, histories, appreciations and estimates of individual authors or periods, and books about books—including such books as this. A novelist more or less consciously picks and chooses among the past achievements of the art he practises, reassembling them as the basis for his own superstructure. His doing so is criticism. Subsequently, he is always examining the materials and proportions of his own structure, to strengthen or modify or discard; and the process by which he does that is criticism. He learns much from his successes and failures; something from his readers; more from the successes and failures of his contemporaries; a little perhaps from the formal appraisals of the critic —in short, he grows, or at least changes, and his growth is a result of criticism. Whole generations and schools of novelists, in periods of international diffusion such as the latter 17th century and the early 20th, learn from the fiction and the criticism of other countries; on a sudden, perhaps indeed too suddenly, their ingrowing provincialism becomes outward-reaching cosmopolitanism. That change means criticism brought to bear on a still grander scale. And, finally, whatever other forces fail or prevail, there is always the Zeitgeist, the general movement and direction of humane consciousness

—a subtle, irresistible, ceaseless play of criticism over the whole field of things dreamed, known, or done, compelling all representative art, in common with all other civilized manifestations, to be a response to needs so inchoate that they may never have got themselves expressed or acknowledged save in their results, yet so universally cogent that no living individual can will to refuse them his service.

Everything, properly considered, is a criticism of everything else. Whenever we perceive the differences between one thing and another, and then commit ourselves to a choice in the light of some felt need for one thing as against the other, we perform an act of criticism. It is manifestly a danger that we shall underrate, rather than overrate, the momentousness of the critical faculty so defined.

This book is not, then, primarily a history of the English novel from Defoe to Hardy, even though it includes much illustrative description of the principal developments between 1700 and 1900; and neither is it a treatise on criticism or the æsthetics of fiction *in vacuo*. It is a statement of some critical and æsthetic principles in terms of their historical evolution in and from the English novel. I choose the English novel because on the whole it developed most provincially, refusing until singularly late to become a matter of comparative literature, and becoming at length so suddenly overwhelmed with international modernness that its story seems especially determinate and dramatic. It should be added that I have not been ashamed to include a great deal of historical in-

formation simply because I think it ought to be familiar to students of the novel, or to make use of the obvious and the truistic when to do so helps the argument.

It is a graceless thing to parade one's own merits, but I really cannot forbear pointing out my one small claim to the gratitude of all and sundry. Except for a trivial indiscretion committed by Mr. William Dean Howells more than a quarter of a century ago, and reproduced on page 268, you might search in vain through these ten chapters for the aimless and question-begging word "psychology" or any of its derivatives.

W. F.

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I

THE CREATIVE IMPULSE

I

THIS series of discussions about the purpose and the meaning of fiction does not aspire to be anything half so fundamental or half so presumptuous as a metaphysical justification of the novel. The metaphysical justification of anything—including both fiction, which is a "criticism of life," and life itself—rests on premises dictated by the philosophy one happens to believe in. To the pessimist, nothing justifies its existence, not even his own despair; to the optimist, all things work together for good, even the things that seem, when taken by themselves and momentarily, worst. The cynic sage who wrote, in a burst of fretful impatience, "Of making books there is no end," would have found nothing to solace him in this age when, it is said, everybody who is not writing novels is reading them, and when (it may be added) every one is talking about them, even the persons who neither read nor write them. The optimist, on the other hand, is not only not put out of countenance by the making and selling of many very bad books, but he can even face without chagrin the sad modern industry of reviewing them.

Now it is not the function of the critic to dictate to his audience the philosophical opinions they should hold; they would not listen to him anyway, for we

choose our philosophies, as we do our occupations or our neckties, by temperamental bias. Theologies go as much by favour as kisses do. Any discussion has to begin therefore with immense assumptions,—that is, if it insist on getting somewhere,—and even what we call "first principles" take unspeakable things for granted. What we must take for granted here is a certain resigned and unflinching state of the conscience, an objective and impartially inquiring condition to which most humane intelligences come sooner or later, in which all the works of both nature and man seem worth an expenditure of interest or of curiosity—among them not least the fine art of telling stories.

It is far from my thought to say that whatever is is right,—the philosophy of a shallow opportunist without responsibility,—or that a thing is good simply because it exists in great quantity, as anything must to be popularly accredited. But one can say that there is a very important sense in which whatever exists is worth considering, even if the consideration amount only to a casual passing glance. The universality of our interest in fiction does not prove that fiction has any inherent right to the space it occupies in our libraries or in our lives; but it does prove that we have given fiction a sort of pragmatic claim on us by giving so much of ourselves to it. In short, books, and more especially novels, are worth writing and buying and reading and criticizing in just about the measure of our finding them so. Work of the hand, work of the brain—it is all subject to the same law;

this law which, where it touches the study of the classics, also a pursuit resting on vast assumptions, we tritely embody in an admonition to young men who are supposed not to enjoy their work: "You'll get out of it exactly what you put into it." Things mean what we find in them or bring out of them for ourselves, by imagination, insight, the will to be interested; books are worth whatever we make them worth in terms of our own curiosity or wonder or inspiration—the impersonal virtues of the mind.

Such then is the initial postulate, and the only justification of the novel that need be attempted here. The study of fiction is a pleasurable task whose value is to be measured, not in abstractions, not in any remote philosophical or æsthetic categories, but empirically and pragmatically, in terms of its effect on our own emotions and wills. The question is not, What must be our attitude toward the art of fiction? It is rather, What must fiction have done to us before it becomes deserving of consideration as an art? Fiction is a creative art in that it creates something in its audience. Therein it is like friendship. He who makes a friend, as Mr. Chesterton says, makes a man. The novelist and his reader create and perpetuate each other, by a uniquely impersonal reciprocity. The ideal responsibility of fiction is to make us dream nobly and disinterestedly, to give a beautiful and intelligible shape to the best of our desire. If it do that, it justifies itself in and through us. Meanwhile it is for criticism to say whether the dreaming is noble and disinterested, the shape of it a

beautiful and intelligible one; to make sure that our bread is not a stone—or, as Professor Saintsbury says in a slightly different connection, pie-crust.

And so we begin a stage farther along than the question whether the intrinsic claim of the novel is such that we ought to concede anything to it; farther along, where we meet these two other questions, What *are* the claims of the novel? and What is or may be the nature of the concession we do make?

II

There is, it will appear from the form of these questions, a reason for the apparent repetition in a general title such as "The Purpose and the Meaning of Fiction." The purpose of fiction is one thing: the meaning of fiction is, or may be, quite another. We can see and admit forthwith, as an axiom of good sense, that high merit in fiction is likely to have something to do with the incidence of purpose and meaning; the best novel, other things being equal, is that in which the effect sensed by the reader is most like that intended by the author, and the poorest novel, other things remaining equal, is that in which the effect sensed is least like that intended. One does, to be sure, hear music discussed by seemingly intelligent persons who profess to believe that the composer merely surrenders himself to inexplicable impulses and emotions, creating he knows not what, and caring not at all whether his impulses and emotions are repro-

duced in the listener, so long as *some* sufficiently intense effects are produced. To any one who traces in music primarily its design or pattern—or, let us say, to whom music is unintelligible without its pattern—this is an abhorrent theory of inspiration. Still, many persons do hold it; and perhaps it may be extended without flagrant irrationality to lyric poetry, and even to some kinds of plastic representation. But hardly to imaginative literature as we have known it in prose. We dispute now and again about what Shakspere meant by certain parts of *Hamlet;* but no one doubts that he meant something, that he was deliberately trying to communicate the same meaning to us all, and that either the play or the audience relatively fails whenever the audience misses community of impression. In this discussion of the relation between purveyor and public, it makes little difference which fails: the point is all in the success or failure of the *relation.* There is no consummation of art except in the audience.

It is quite true that, in some rare instances, the artist may profit by an effect not in his intention; may actually, without knowing it, build better than his design. Every reader of Fielding will remember two gentlemen, or rather two animated and diverting caricatures, by name Thwackum and Square, who had charge of the upbringing of Tom Jones. Mr. Square the philosopher is always talking about "the natural beauty of virtue"; to Mr. Thwackum the clergyman there is no power except "the divine power of grace." Probably Fielding intended to represent, in these two

quaint ethical theorists, simply two characteristic 18th century notions which he hated and wished to hold up to ridicule: the notion that thinking straight is the way of salvation however crooked one's conduct, and the notion that straight conduct is worthless unless it is inspired by a prescribed way of thinking—in this instance the creed of the Church of England. Both figures are incomplete as men; they remain simply walking embodiments of their respective narrow doctrines, in spite of Fielding's evident desire to give them human nature and make them humanly live. It takes a more modern detachment than Fielding ever knew to see the fitness of his failure. There is an almost symbolic appropriateness in the hollow unreality of Messrs. Thwackum and Square: how *could* such ideas, so held, produce actual human beings? The limitations of these two as men prove, as no amount of calculated satire could, the limitations of their doctrines. It takes the capacity for spontaneous warm-hearted action, plus the sense of legitimate impersonal law imposed from without, to make the rounded man; to be complete and real is to adjust the natural inward impulses to the artificial codes by which we must needs partly live. How fitting, then, that it should take Thwackum and Square together to come somewhere near making up one average piece of human nature! Here is an instance which shows the artist gaining something through his failure to carry out his intention: if the characters were complete as men, they would be pointless and inconsistent as doctrinaires. And I have sometimes thought that

so great an artist as Jane Austen gains as a social comedist by revealing in the world of her persons a moral poverty and narrowness which she hardly saw there herself.

Such examples are, however, not frequent. In general the novelist loses by missing his design. *Jane Eyre* is weakened, however far from crucially, because Rochester, who was intended for a gentleman, is so obviously a cad. The history of fiction is full of writers who lost much through the illusion that they could portray types they did not know and manage scenes they had never caught the spirit of.

We want fiction, then, to understand what it is about and plan the effect which it can produce. But this is not to say that the plan and the effect are the same thing. The given effect may follow from the given cause, but cause is still one thing and effect another. In considering fiction, it happens to be of singular importance to keep this disjunction in mind, to the end that we may understand something of the all-important relation between subjective and objective. That is why I have made the first group of these discussions deal with fiction as I suppose it to be conceived and written, the second group with fiction as it is read and understood. I want to analyse first, as well as I can, what writers put into their stories and the processes by which they put it in; and then, what readers get out of those stories and the re-creative processes by which they get it out.

And naturally I begin with the mainspring of all poetic effort, the initial creative impulse, asking some

very plain and elemental questions: What is the force which urges the story-teller to take up the pen and drive it forward? Whence comes that special desire of his to tell a story for the delight or the profit of those whom he has never seen, and what is the nature of that desire? It will be understood that there is here no speaking officially or *pro domo,* no claim of special divination: we proceed by deduction and inference, trying if we can to descry the intention in the performance, as Mr. Kipling's Builder, coming on the ruined work of a predecessor, reads

"The form of the dream he had followed in the face of the thing he had planned."

III

I have spoken of fiction as having something to do with dreaming: let me distinguish it at once from that idle and irresponsible day-dreaming in which, at odd times, we all lose ourselves with a certain visionary of modern fiction, "forgetting the bitterness of toil and strife in the vision of a great and splendid reward."[1] We all lie awake at night and plan for ourselves impossible golden futures in which we are the impossible heroes and heroines, achieving the prodigious with hardly the effort which in real life we must give to the commonplace, getting our ene-

[1] Almayer, in *Almayer's Folly.* By Joseph Conrad. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.

mies humbled and our supreme deserts acknowledged and rewarded, and having our own way generally. There is a superstition abroad that the genetic impulse of fiction is like this, and fiction itself the writer's dream, his escape from burdensome actualities. And certainly many readers take their fiction as an escape, a drug or anodyne—a kind of vicarious day-dreaming.

Not so, I believe, the artist. The only day-dreams really worth while are those in which we lose ourselves, transcending reality as on wings, breathing upper airs of impossible rarity; but the only novels really worth while are those in which the novelist never for an instant loses his complete sense of self-possession, the perfect awareness of what he is about. His dreaming is purposed and controlled; it differs in a dozen sharp and unequivocal ways from the purely subjective dreams through which the best of us at times let ourselves beautifully drift. Our dreams are exceptional and lawless, we conjure up delights that never were on land or sea; the novelist's dream is typical and regulated. Our dreams are very likely to be patched copies of other dreams heard or read, as every cheap popular song is a mosaic of all other cheap popular songs; whereas the novelist's dream must be, in its central nature, an original thing, or it would better not be at all. What we distort, he reduces to shape and balance; what we leave to its own unobstructed play on our charitable credulity, he cannot leave until it is presentable to the uncharitable incredulity of mankind in general. Our day-dream is

a result of inhibitions broken down and swept away: we let ourselves go. The novelist, however like his creative instinct may be to ours, cannot do that; half the worth of his dream is in the checks and inhibitions which govern the unfolding of it.

All these differences reduce themselves on inspection to a single inclusive difference: we dream day-dreams for pure self-delight, using the gift of fancy to glut ourselves; whereas the novelist writes stories in order to *give* himself, for the delight of readers whom he has never seen and cannot know. The conditions of his work are determined by the fact that it is work and not play; by the fact that he has an audience with a receptivity subservient to a set of laws which he must master; a set of exceedingly subtle and elusive laws whose working is of a nicety almost past finding out. The one faculty upon which he cannot play at will is that self-love which is in every one of us, and which is alone sufficient to give our day-dreams the temporary illusion of reality. We can believe in anything so long as it is ours, part of us. But the novelist asks us to enter into something which is not ours at all, something to which our self-interest can give no hue of reality, since no self-interest is at hazard. The artist is always trying to appeal to an attention outside and other than his own. Without this will to appeal there is no art.

It is some such set of considerations which we forget when we define art as "self-expression"—an unintelligible definition, confusing as it does this ordered and self-possessed visioning of the artist with the un-

bridled self-gratification of our most selfish moments. Of course we express ourselves in whatever we do; all activity is self-expression, so that the term really defines nothing because it covers everything. Walking is self-expression, if you like, and the gait an index of character. So is lying: it is possible that we are never more truly ourselves than when we think we are concealing ourselves. But we walk to get somewhere; we lie to accomplish something. A novel too is a measure of its writer; but he writes it in order to get something communicated. He cannot help expressing himself: a man under an anæsthetic, or incoherently drunk, or suffocating in thick smoke where he must shout for help, does that. But the whole crux of the novelist's difficulty is to get himself *communicated;* and it is a sentimental mistake of some popular theorists to suppose that he can do that by pure "inspiration," or pure self-communion apart from his audience in the penetralia of his own consciousness. The lyric poet may sometimes, not otherwise than by happiest accident, speak to us intelligibly from those hidden recesses. Not so the novelist. He deals with a truth which cannot be breathed out of himself: he must seek it through the world with pain and effort, win it for his own by living it—

> "For truth needs doing; beauty seems
> A dream till we awake from dreams"—

and shape and re-clothe it, not for himself, but for us.

He will do well to remember, if the struggle for bare existence has not already made it impossible to forget,

Stevenson's comparison of the artist to the *fille de joie,* the obscure and draggled woman of the streets; for he too is taking pay for his laughter, his companionship, the gift of himself, nor can anything hide or change the elemental fact which is the material excuse for his trade—the fact that he lives by it. "An author," says Fielding at the beginning of *Tom Jones,* "ought to consider himself, not as a gentleman who gives a private or eleemosynary treat, but rather as one who keeps a public ordinary, at which all persons are welcome for their money. . . . Men who pay for what they eat will insist on gratifying their palates, however nice and whimsical these may prove; and if everything is not agreeable to their taste, will challenge a right to censure, to abuse, and to damn their dinner without control." The best instincts in us may lament the fact: Mr. Howells says, in writing of "The Man of Letters as a Man of Business,"[1] "I do not think any man ought to live by an art. . . . There is an instinctive sense of this, even in the midst of the grotesque confusion of our economic being; people feel that there is something profane, something impious, in taking money for a picture, or a poem, or a statue. . . . The instinctive sense of the dishonour which money-purchase does to art is so strong that sometimes a man of letters who can pay his way otherwise refuses pay for his work, as Lord Byron did, for a while, from a noble pride, and as Count Tolstoy has tried to do, from a noble

[1] In *Literature and Life.* By William Dean Howells. New York: Harper & Bros.

conscience." But even such personal independence only shifts the evil: "Byron's publisher profited by a generosity which did not reach his readers; and the Countess Tolstoy collects the copyright which her husband foregoes [this was published in 1902]; so that these two eminent instances of protest against business in literature may be said not to have shaken its money basis." And even if writer, publisher, and public could all completely escape buying and selling, the writer would still have no hold upon his public except by pleasing it. His appeal as an artist is dependent on the arbitrary taste of a multitude, even if his living cease to be—so that if he can make up his mind to the greater limitation, it is hardly worth his while to boggle at the lesser.

We need no Fielding, no Stevenson, no Howells come to tell us such things: they are matters of plainest hardest common sense. But they are too often forgotten. The argument has sometimes been used to justify giving the buying and reading public the poorest thing it can be brought to accept, instead of the best thing it, perhaps unconsciously, wants; but almost any argument can be prostituted to a low expediency. We say that the artist must serve, if he is to discharge his office at all: this is not to say that he ought to pander. If he choose to pander, we should let him; our safeguard against him is the public right to find him out in the long run and have no more of him; it is not in the destruction of his right to be what he chooses. But in either event, whether he panders or truly serves, he has fully as much to gain

through self-suppression as through self-expression. He must be true to himself; but that fidelity will avail him nothing unless he is also true to his audience, to his subject, and to the obscure principles of his appeal to thousands of intelligences as unlike his own as they are unlike each other.

Let us see, if we can, what some of the chief of these principles are, and how they operate; what kinds of provision the novelist must make for his audience that the mere dreamer of dreams takes no thought of.

IV

One thinks pretty readily of four special ways in which the novelist must take thought and thoroughly know what he is about; four provisions which he must thoroughly accomplish if his work is completely to justify itself in our eyes. They are, to name them only: (1) Realism of Circumstance; (2) Truth by Representation; (3) Freshness or Originality; and (4) Fusion of these three and of all the other elements that enter into his subject. Realism, Representation, Originality, and Fusion. Let us see what ought to be meant by these labels.

The first, Realism of Circumstance, explains itself. Of the realistic spirit I shall have, later on, much more to say: I speak here, not of a spirit, but of a process. It is obvious enough that the sound master of fiction, knowing that he can successfully impart no dream of his through credulity based on self-love,

must take infinite precaution that it shall seem true; and that the more romantic it is in essence the more realistic he must make it in detail. There is no better exemplification of this truism than that Daniel Defoe—a master, Professor Sir Walter Raleigh calls him, of "grave imperturbable lying"—who wrote a lengthy account of the London plague of 1665 with such vividness that many unlearned readers still accept it as the account of an eye-witness, though Defoe was but four years old in the Plague Year; who contrived a recital of a certain great November storm from hearsay and imagination, recounting casualties by land and sea, and including wholly fictitious letters from eye-witnesses who never existed; who gave many preposterous events in all parts of the world the immediacy and the ring of truth, simply by giving them a latitude and a longitude; and who, as the summit of his achievement, took the most utterly romantic figure of all, the lonely hermit of Juan Fernandez, and made him easily the most real of all, by diary, by dialogue, by inventory, by all the little fine arts of persuasion. "There never was such a man or such an island," you say (it makes no difference that, historically speaking, there was); "there never was a Crusoe, or a hut with a hedge of stakes round it, or a boat hollowed labouriously out of a tree and then found to be immovably heavy." To which credulity answers: "Ah, but you forget: all these things were, because a man wrote a diary about them! They might, in an ordinary sea-tale, seem rather a large order; but—why, we have the man's own diary!"

And there is an image of what the artist's quest for actuality must be, in a certain "scowered" silk dress worn by a lady some twenty-four hours dead, and used by Defoe to help sell a seventh-rate and unsalable clerical work, Drelincourt's *Book of Consolations Against the Fears of Death,* with which the London book trade appears to have been overstocked in 1705. The estimable Mrs. Bargrave, living at Canterbury, receives one morning a call from her old friend and neighbour Mrs. Veal, whom she has not seen for a long time, and who announces now that she has come to say good-bye before taking a journey. The two gossip together in a most natural and familiar vein, about head-aches, and husbands, and friendship, and the degeneracy of the times, and other reliable subjects, taking pains to allude several times to the great comfort and inspiration they have received from that incomparable work, the *Book of Consolations.* All is most natural; the talk proceeds like a stenographic report of things actually said by two such middle-class, prosy, and sentimental persons. "'Do not you think I am mightily impaired by my fits?'" asks Mrs. Veal. "'No,' says Mrs. Bargrave, 'I think you look as well as ever I knew you.'" And again: "Says Mrs. Bargrave: 'It is hard indeed to find a true friend in these days.' Says Mrs. Veal, 'Mr. Norris has a fine copy of verses, called *Friendship in Perfection,* which I wonderfully admire. Have you seen the book?' 'No,' says Mrs. Bargrave, 'but I have the verses of my own writing

out.' 'Have you?' says Mrs. Veal, 'then fetch them.' Which she did from above-stairs, and offered them to Mrs. Veal to read, who refused, and waived the thing, saying, holding down her head would make it ache; and then desiring Mrs. Bargrave to read them to her, which she did. . . . In these verses there is twice used the word 'Elysian.' 'Ah!' says Mrs. Veal, 'these poets have such names for heaven.'" In short, the whole tale is inimitably and incontestably true, up to the point where it transpires that at the time of this conversation Mrs. Veal was also incontestably dead. Everything in the story is true except the whole of it. And mark how difficult Defoe makes it to question even that whole. The tale is told by a third woman of exactly the same stamp as the other two, a life-long friend of Mrs. Bargrave, ready to heap scorn on the husband and neighbours of Mrs. Veal, who deny the story and impeach the character of Mrs. Bargrave. Why, Mrs. Bargrave is "of a cheerful disposition, notwithstanding the ill-usage of a very wicked husband"; of course, then, the story is true. Besides, this third woman's story has been taken down by a lawyer, who believes it himself; clearly, then, it must be true! Moreover, Mrs. Bargrave had described in considerable detail the "scowered" silk dress which Mrs. Veal actually wore on the day of her death, the day of the alleged visit, *though Mrs. Bargrave had never seen that dress or known of its existence:* what do you say to that? O well, if Mrs. Bargrave really described the dress,

there's nothing more to be said; the story *is* true, and the *Book of Consolations* is a fine book, and let's all go and see if there is a copy to be had.

Observe, incidentally, the advertising logic of the appeal: Drelincourt must be a book to buy, because a ghost said so. We shall not be far amiss if we think of Defoe as having been, among other things variously important, the father of modern advertising. What it is most desirable to point out here is that he mastered to perfection the art of making a little extraneous and unimportant fact go as far as possible toward establishing his central fiction. The more outrageous his fundamental demand on the credulity, the more care must he take to weave that demand out of a tissue of the commonplace, the daily homespun actual. And so it is ever with the worker in fiction. He must do for a high impersonal end what Defoe did, on more than one occasion, to serve a rather low commercial or political expediency.

V

This first kind of care, for Realism of Circumstance, makes a target of the credulity; its purpose is to make one see and, through seeing, believe. Fiction has been much likened, of late, to journalism; but in this respect at least it differs from journalism. We have a presumption in favour of the truth of what the newspaper reporter tells us; at least we do unless we make a serious matter of the trite popular joke

about reporters. But our presumption is all against the truth of what the novelist tells us. Of the two, it is he who must take pains to make his story seem true; and when he makes it seem truer than truth, we believe him.

But his truth to fact, though one of the conditions of his usefulness, is far from being his prime value. Fiction begins to accomplish its real purpose when it attains what I have called Truth by Representation. It must first make us believe; it must then evoke from us a response to that which we have accepted as truth. And it does this through implied reference to larger realities than are explicitly presented; such realities as the common truths of all life, the mysteries of birth and death, the invincible ambitions and terrors of the mind, the moral law, the general nature of things. Fiction must have its facts; but it must also have its "meaning of things beyond the facts." For it is in the linking of subordinate trivial details and episodes with the trend of a whole individual life, and in the linking of the individual life with the whole collective mass of human lives, that the novel wins its place as a "criticism of life."

I can think of no better example of a story that has this kind of reference in large and satisfying measure than one very familiar story notably lacking in our lesser and lower kind of realism: Dr. Johnson's wholly pleasing and still strangely beautiful story of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia. I am aware that a good many critics have described *Rasselas* as a romantic expression of pessimism, and also

that Professor William Lyon Phelps has lately taken the trouble to pronounce a curt little requiescat[1] over what he considers a corpse past resuscitating. But how can *Rasselas* be, or become, a dead story when it contains so much wisdom about life, garbed in so beautiful a vesture of imagery and symbolism? And how can it be called a pessimistic story, when it contains, not a philosophical interpretation of a fact, but the bare and simple fact alone? "The Vanity of Human Wishes"—that is the theme of *Rasselas,* the large general fact about life which it represents. Well, human wishes are vain, aren't they? which is all that Dr. Johnson says. He bases his tale on the fact, hardly open to dispute, that whatever we get out of life we do not get what we are looking for. He does not say that we *ought* to get what we are looking for; he does not say, as a pessimist would, that our failure to get it proves the evil organization of the world. Johnson draws his indictment, not against the sorry scheme of things which cheats human nature out of its fond hopes, but against the sorry scheme of human nature itself, which hopes unreasonably, vaunts itself, overestimates its own deserts, and claims more than it is in the nature of things to grant. *Rasselas* is a plea for classical or stoic discipline of the will. At the best, it says,

> "Man has but little here below,
> Nor has that little long":

then it is the part of wisdom for him to curb his ex-

[1] In *The Advance of the English Novel.* By William Lyon Phelps. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

pectations, make the most of his little, and turn from following illusive phantoms of happiness and freedom which the collective wisdom of mankind has never been able to capture. Rasselas and his sister leave their Happy Valley to fare through the world in search of contentment. They find many strange things, and some sad ones; they find wisdom and folly, work and idleness, pleasure of the voluptuary and asceticism of the hermit, all strivings and all miseries—but not contentment. In the end they go back to the Happy Valley, dedicating themselves to the idea of service to their own people, a beneficent rule. Johnson never says that idleness is better than work, that folly is as good as wisdom: he says only that life is for every one of us something other than we expect it to be, and that we have not learned the secret of what life is until we stop abusing it for not living up to our misconception of it. This is not pessimistic doctrine: it is wise counsel, based on one of the eternal verities, deriving its sweetness from a pervasive mild melancholy far removed from cynicism, and its strength from the universal applicability of its one central truth about life.

This kind of appeal through a large general truth, of which *Rasselas* is one of the purest examples, makes the least possible demand on our third care, for Originality. One can indeed distort, but one can hardly invent, the eternal verities; and for this reason the one element of the novel that would best not undertake to be new is its philosophy. But there is another, and probably more important, kind of

Truth by Representation, which does interlock with the necessity of being original. The novelist makes use, whether he mean to or not, of general truths about the world and about man's life therein; but this fact is not so arresting as his citizenship in the largest, most universal state that has ever existed, the state of our common Human Nature. The novelist must provide something new in human character and personality, at the same time that he observes the universally experienced laws of animal behaviour, the common stock of motive and impulse, passion and sentiment. He must be master of similarity in difference; he must acquaint us with new beings, the elements so mixed in them that we feel them as definite additions to our world, and yet he must weave them out of the old, old substances, the desires we have all known, the contradictions and incongruities that are parts of all of us—the human nature that we all partake of. The folk we meet in his pages must be themselves, yet like ourselves; their hearts must beat in echo to the common heart of mankind, yet somehow in a different, an individual and personal rhythm.

This achievement alone can be called "creative" in the most elemental sense known to literary art. The creation of a new character is akin to the stroke of cosmic creation which brings something out of nothing, substance out of the void and the breath of life out of the inert substance. If we consider the pre-eminence in our English imaginative literature of three names, Chaucer, Shakspere, Dickens, we

shall find its secret in the host of complete, rounded, and original pieces of human nature which throng to our memory at the mention of those names. Their human creations represent the world, our world of action and emotion, all complete; and they represent themselves too, they are creatures that were never in the world before.

For this elemental creative power there is no rival and no substitute. Ingenuity and experience can account for originality of setting, the preparation of new hues and blends of local colour; ingenuity and labour can devise plots whose sequences shall seem new. But only the most impersonal and selfless genius can create a Pardoner, a Falstaff, a Mr. Sapsea, or—to add one other novelist who lives principally in his fewer created personalities—an Uncle Toby. Having this power, a great novelist can almost afford to lack everything else. It has been said of Dickens that his characters were good "so long as he could keep them out of his stories." His minor characters are more alive than the major characters of most writers; and we care little whether they carry on the story or not, so long as they consent to live on before us in that "perpetual summer of being themselves." Some critics have said that Laurence Sterne's principal stock-in-trade was his whimsical nicety in salacious innuendo. Not so: for his name would long since have been forgotten had he not affixed it to Uncle Toby, the real immortal.

Shall we let Fielding speak for us once more, on this subject of Human Nature?

"The provision, then, which we have here [i. e., in *Tom Jones*] made is no other than *Human Nature.* Nor do I fear that my sensible reader, though most luxurious in his taste, will start, cavil, or be offended, because I have named but one article. The tortoise—as the alderman of Bristol, well learned in eating, knows by much experience—besides the delicious calipash and calipee, contains many different kinds of food; nor can the learned reader be ignorant, that in human nature, though here collected under one general name, is such prodigious variety, that a cook will have sooner gone through all the several species of animal and vegetable food in the world, than an author will be able to exhaust so extensive a subject.

"An objection may perhaps be apprehended from the more delicate, that this dish is too common and vulgar; for what else is the subject of all the romances, novels, plays, and poems, with which the stalls abound? Many exquisite viands might be rejected by the epicure, if it was a sufficient cause for his contemning of them as common and vulgar, that something was to be found in the most paltry alleys under the same name. In reality, true nature is as difficult to be met with in authors, as the Bayonne ham, or Bologna sausage, is to be found in the shops."

VI

And now, the fourth and final matter, Artistic Fusion. There will be more to say about unity in the

work of fiction when we come to some of the interesting problems of design; but at least I may throw out here, as obvious and self-explanatory, the suggestion that a skilfully written novel, however complex and various its elements, must be in some sense single, of a piece; that the various elements must be woven somehow into a texture. Character, action, and scene must be parts of each other; at the least they must hold an interdependent relation, strike their several notes in a larger harmony. When I said a moment ago that we could almost concede Dickens his place on the strength and living originality of his characters alone, I was trusting a good deal to the "almost." The art of fiction, when really a fine art, cannot divorce character from action, any more than Thwackum and Square could divorce real ideas from conduct. And if, in addition to its scene and action and character, the novel contain general truisms about life, those too must come legitimately—that is, logically and inevitably—out of the action, at once governing and explaining it; they must not be simply the gratuitous plastered-on opinions of the author. His affair is to create his puppets and then let them seem to manage their own destinies: let him not jerk them this way and that on wires palpably of his own contriving.

Of course really strong and persuasive action is that which seems to come out of the characters' own wills, or out of their own weaknesses. An action which we all recognize as the only one open to the given person in the given situation has artistic inevitability.

An act which divides our opinions and starts arguments among critics may be dubiously contrived, an artistic shortcoming; or the character may be exceedingly complex or vacillating, so that inevitability is less determinate. An act which stamps its own preposterousness on our minds means that the artist has suffered a lapse of co-operation between his personæ and his plot. These considerations are self-evident: one can do no more, and no less, than state them. But the obviousness of the principle does not lessen the difficulty of the practice; and the perfect fusion, on a grand scale, of action and character is an objective attained by only a few supreme books in English, and by only a handful of authors in the whole history of fiction.

There is another relation which can be, though it usually is not, as intimate as that between action and character: that of scene or setting on one hand to action and character on the other. In the novel up to about 1860, we find comparatively little subtlety in the reported effects of the place upon the person. In Fielding, in Scott even, places are depicted only as a stage is set: that the drama may have a local habitation and not proceed *in vacuo*. At least such authors as these two are safe from the modern craze for local colour as a thing of independent interest, however irrelevant; that craze, now happily on the wane, is the ultimate debasement of background. Most of the local colourists of a decade ago ought to have written travelogues, not novels; one laughs with Mr. Ellis Parker Butler through the few pages of his

skit, "The Scenic Novel,"[1] written at their expense, and suspects meanwhile that most of them are laughing at themselves by this time. Mere local colour, most often painted on so thick that it scales, is decidedly not enough; nor did Mr. Kipling, who unintentionally set the vogue, ever pretend in his own practice that it was enough. One should either be a scientific explorer of the impalpable effects of region and clime, or else content one's self with the simple old fashion that treats scene-shifting as merely a necessary evil.

But scene as mere background, for reality's sake or adornment's, is not the ultimate fusion of fine craftsmanship. Through the romantic revival, with its sudden interest in the external world of nature, and on through the period of humanitarianism, one finds a steadily increasing sense of the rapport between man and man's habitat. Gray had this sense in the *Elegy;* Goldsmith had more than a smattering of it in *The Deserted Village.* It first crept into the novel, I believe, through the "School of Terror"; Mrs. Radcliffe among others used it for cunning, if somewhat tawdry, effects of mystery and horror. In the Irish novels of Miss Edgeworth, in the Scottish novels of Scott, the scene becomes, however unconsciously, something a little more than the picturesque frame it was meant to be; and when we come to Dickens we come to a host of characters who are the creatures of their environment. After this, the way is made straight to such pieces of atmosphere as the

[1] *The Scenic Novel.* By Ellis Parker Butler. *Atlantic Monthly,* March, 1911.

Wuthering Heights of Emily Brontë and *The Return of the Native* of Hardy—to name perhaps the most significant developments in this kind on either side of George Eliot's earlier novels. The hither end of the tendency is to be found in those highly specialized stories of the Five Towns in which Mr. Arnold Bennett works out to great elaboration the theory that people derive their habits, their ideas, the texture of their personalities, from the source of their livelihood. Farther than this the novel can hardly go in interpreting character as suffused and permeated with the "spirit of place."

From these few scattered historical items it will appear that mere novelty of setting, or even mere scholarly fulness of reproduction, is not an important end in itself—that is, for the novel. A skilful harmony between the simplest folk and the simplest environment will communicate more, and endure longer, than the greatest elaboration without that harmony, as may be seen in the contrast between *Silas Marner,* the least pretentious of George Eliot's "novels of memory," and *Romola,* the most pretentious of her novels of scholarship. In *Romola* she does all that scholarship can do for the Florence of the Cinquecento; she marshals it before us, a tremendous historical pageant. But through it walks Romola herself, a great woman indeed, but rather a womanly British maiden of mid-Victorian time than a girl of Florence and the Renaissance. The incongruity defeats both the largeness of the design and the scholarship of the details. Similarly, the tales of Captain

Marryatt are full of sea parlance, the rigging and manœuvering of ships; Captain Marryatt knows the sea, as a trade, as well as any one who has ever written of it. But he does not know the sea as a spell, as a creator of men in its own mysterious image; and to this day there is more authentic salt in one of Smollett's sailor men roaring out strange oaths in the tap-room of some quiet village ale-house many miles from the sea, than there is in all the ship's companies on all the decks of Captain Marryatt's fiction.

II

ROMANCE

I

Whoever talks with any consecutiveness about the history of fiction, or the ideals and processes of fiction, drops sooner or later into the terminology of a traditional classification, that represented by the two words "realism" and "romance." Already we have stumbled upon these two intrusive and irrepressible words, and heard them put in their claim to definition. I said, perhaps too debonairly, that the more romantic a novelist's theme inherently is, the more realistic must be his dealing with it, if his result is to do successful traffic with the reader's credulity. I need not bother to defend the statement, which will doubtless commend itself to the intelligence as true in general within the meaning of its context, though open, like all general principles, to exception and modification. Nor need I recur again to realism of that lower order which governs the choice and transcription of authentic details and circumstances from life, and which we may call the realistic technique as distinguished from the realistic spirit. But we are still very much in the challenging presence of the problem in definition propounded by the word "romance," without some solution of which there is no rational approach to a tenable ground of interpretation and criticism.

For my part, I confess that I name the romantic

spirit with misgiving, and study it, or what I may provisionally speak of as being it, with bafflement. As a youngster of fifteen, devouring Fenimore Cooper as, I fancy, youngsters of fifteen still do, I was quite confident of my own ability to draw the tight straight line between one kind of fiction that is romantic and nothing else, and another kind that is realistic and nothing else. But the slightly older youngster begins to see that there is a misty mid-region between romance and realism, and that the boundaries of the two are indefinable rather than precise, movable rather than fixed. And eventually he sees pure romance and pure realism as being like nothing so much as the invisible extremes, the infra-red and the ultra-violet, of the colour spectrum, which, being invisible to so coarse an organ as the sensual eye, may be said for rough pragmatic purposes not to exist. The million gradations and mixtures in between, *they* exist. And so do the million gradations and mixtures of romance and realism; but the more one reads and thinks about what one has read, the more one suspects that pure romance and pure realism are as the infra-red and the ultra-violet of the spectrum—concepts of the mind, practically attainable it may be in that consummation where the artist in words shall

> ". . . splash at a seven-league canvas, with brushes of comets' hair,"

but seen in their purity thus far on no canvas of the finite and mortal novelist, nor in the transient flame

of any one of those beacons which the young adventuring minds are for ever setting up on the changing shore-line of art. The poet and teller of tales whose line I have just quoted, himself a more than ordinarily puzzling example of realism and romance mingled, addresses himself to the True Romance as to a goddess and guide; but in the very phrases which pledge him to the True Romance he says, with one of the fine despairs of faith—

> "Thy face is far from this our war,
> Our call and counter-cry;
> I shall not find Thee quick and kind,
> Nor know Thee till I die.
> Enough for me in dreams to see
> And touch Thy garment's hem:
> Thy feet have trod so near to God
> I may not follow them."

Herein he is like a mystic devotee groping after the unknowable, and half realizing the while that all the virtue is in the groping, not in the knowing.

And so, as I talk about romance, I confess it is with growing doubts—not merely whether there *is* any romance, but also, supposing romance to exist definably, whether the distinction between it and realism is as valuable as we sometimes try to make it out. A one-time President of Dartmouth College who made the opening prayer at a gathering of college presidents met to consider problems of academic administration (also, in its way, a difficult and indeterminate subject) closed his invocation with these words, the sly humour of which could not, I think, have been wholly

lost on the Almighty: "O Lord, preside over our deliberations; and may our conclusions be wise ones —so far as we come to any conclusions." There is room for the same attitude of intellectual humility in the consideration of romance. And at the end of all our discussing and defining, we need not feel wholly cheated if we discover that what we have discussed and defined is not after all the romance we seek, but another, perhaps the highest, kind of realism. For if romance does not exist with all the importance we attach to it in our thought, if the spirit that animates creative effort in fiction is one and one only, then it is something to have discovered the limitations of our common categories and to have found the point at which our terminology breaks down.

II

So far, the argument goes along on a rather high plane. To descend: We may doubt the sway of romance as a spirit, but we hardly question the existence or the prestige of *romances*. These we have in infinite bulk, subject to a hundred changing modes and conventions,

> "Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll."

It is romance as a spirit, the ruling element common to all the works which we call romances, that needs investigating; a goal or ideal that has something to do with the purpose and the meaning of fiction. Ro-

mance as a school or a fashion is traceable enough in literary history, if only one have the knowledge or the patience. It concerns the technique and the subjects of fiction, rather than its purpose and meaning; and for that reason we go at it cavalierly, knowing it for a counterfeit of the thing we seek, and not the thing itself.

Even at these lower and lowest levels, romance is a complex thing to define, because the word is so variously used, and made the half of so many antitheses. We know what the Romantic Movement was: it was a movement in revolt against classicism, authority, restraint, formalism, and the ancient past, and toward individualism, socialism, humanitarianism, imagination, nature, mysticism, and the mediæval past;—and only incidentally was it a movement toward romances. But we call a detective story a romance, little though it has to do with any of the crucial things of the Romantic Movement; and every one of these crucial things has as much to do with realism as with romance. When we say that Byron was a romantic poet, we use a word of known values, referable as it were to a sort of gold standard of meaning; but when we say that Mrs. Radcliffe or Maturin or Scott was a romantic novelist, we do not know what system of currency we are handling, or what rates of exchange apply to it. We may mean something profoundly important; or we may mean only that Mrs. Radcliffe invented her scenery instead of observing it, that Maturin tried to make you shiver instead of trying to make you laugh, that Scott wrote about Crusaders

and Cavaliers instead of about green-grocers and politicians. It is easy enough to say and, on this lower plane of mere fashions, true enough that Scott and, after him, Stevenson were romantic; Jane Austen and Thackeray and George Eliot realistic; Bulwer-Lytton romantic when he wrote *Rienzi* and realistic when he wrote *My Novel.* It is easy enough to say this; but it is much less easy to be sure just what we mean by it. All the common labels have their truth if we affix them suggestively enough, but they sometimes palpably refuse to stick; they turn up at the corners.

To exemplify: We say that romance has its interest more in actions than in persons; but that is true only of melodrama. We say that romance arbitrarily suppresses many common facts, whereas realism welcomes all facts that are true; but the basis of all art, realistic or romantic, is selection, and therefore exclusion. We say that romance is idealistic; but all great literature is idealistic with it—and moreover where is the idealism in the average detective "romance"? We say that realism deals with the usual, romance with the unusual; but the usual of today is the unusual of tomorrow—and has Addison become a romantic because the coffee-house no longer exists, or can Stephen Crane's extraordinarily realistic story *The Red Badge of Courage* be turned into a romance by the sunrise of that remote day which shall see war archaic, obsolete? Clearly the technical divisions of realistic and romantic do not stand or fall by such factitious matters. Similarly, most of the other common distinctions of text-book and class-

room can be reduced to absurdity. Nor will it help us much to say that romance colours life whereas realism simply copies it; for good realism is not primarily photographic, and both romance and realism *invent* life. You can hardly copy what you have invented; you can only copy what some one else has invented—which is plagiarism.

No: one cannot define even the mechanical traits and tendencies of romance by any such makeshift formulæ. Nor will all one's inquiries be likely to bring a more substantially paying answer than this: —Every age has its dominant qualities, and wearies of them. Those qualities may be actually the virtues of the age, but it wearies of them just the same: nothing bores an age more inexorably than its own virtues in excess, become static and in-growing. Thereupon arises the need, or at least the demand, for a counter-irritant, taking the form of whatever, being most remote and therefore most seductive, reminds the age of what it would like to be and makes it forget what it is—or at least what it seems to itself, which may be a very different thing. That remote and seductive ideal is the romance of the age, and the works dominated by that ideal are its romances. The supreme charm for us all is in something which is somewhere else—in the clouds, or on the inaccessible horizon, or in the past, or behind the veil of the future. You have to have only a fairly large number of people all wanting the same thing which they have not got, to create the conventions of a school of romance. Those conventions will change as soon as the

people have got what they wanted or, more probably, ceased to want it; and then their romances, so far as they referred to that want and nothing else, will cease to be, or will remain to later ages as the property of immature or restless minds who know not what they want. That is why the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe ceased to be everybody's romances and became the romances of boarding-school girls. That is why Mr. W. L. George says[1] that Scott—in whom Mr. George sees only the trappings and conventions—is "reduced to a juvenile circulation."

This, then, is the kernel of our notion of romance according to the popular classifications: *It is the product of a set of conventions* based on a popular demand, the reaction of an epoch against that in itself with which familiarity has bred contempt. We call this work realism, and that romance, first, last, and always by purely mechanical, transient, and often flimsy conventions.

To illustrate: The 17th century, without having undergone any real change of conscience, submitted itself to a set of suppressions, political, social, and religious, which became more and more distasteful. There was presently to be a wide-spreading revolt against the Puritan spirit, the puritanical life; it was to take such forms as the Restoration, the licentious Restoration drama, the satires of Butler, and the pseudo-classicism of Dryden. But before the time was ripe for these, there came a sort of false dawn of

[1] In *Anatole France* (*Writers of the Day*). By W. L. George. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

emancipation, of which false dawn one of the very first rays was the so-called "heroic romance," first imported from Paris in free translation, later closely imitated in London. *The Grand Cyrus* of the Scudérys is the best known of the importations; the *Aretina,* a juvenile work of Sir George Mackenzie, famous jurist and founder of the Advocates' Library of Edinburgh, is selected by Professor Sir Walter Raleigh to represent the native crop. In all the works of this school, the 17th century protests against its own life of bourgeois stuffiness by imagining for itself characters of impossible grandeur and magniloquence, heavily brocaded kings, queens, and nobles who strut and bombast their way through scenes neither ancient nor modern, speaking a language never spoken by man—no, nor woman neither—and patterned of conceits more affected than those of Euphues himself. Congreve, a born realist, said in the Preface to his *Incognita:* "Romances are generally composed of the constant Loves and invincible Courages of Hero's and Heroines, Kings and Queens, Mortals of the first Rank, and so forth: where lofty Language miraculous Contingencies and impossible Performances, elevate and surprise the Reader into a giddy Delight, which leaves him flat upon the Ground, whenever he gives off, and vexes him to think how he has suffer'd himself to be pleased and transported, concern'd and afflicted at the several passages he has read." Thus even Congreve, separated by only a few years from this effeminate school—the *Aretina* was dedicated, as Professor Raleigh notes, "to all the

Ladies of this Nation''—could see what we see more plainly still, that the ''heroic romance'' was really most unheroic bombast, a thing consisting exclusively of conventions wrought out of a momentary desire, and as ephemeral as the desire itself.

III

The history of literature seems to show that romance based on conventions always does one of two things, both of which prove the infirmity of romance so bred and so nourished. It either sinks into the ground, leaving hardly any trace, as this ''heroic romance'' of the 17th century did, or else it finds its way to some renewal of which the most important ingredient is not the romantic convention but the realistic feeling and purpose. The 18th century ''School of Terror,'' the novel's contribution to the Romantic Revival, illustrates this second possible destiny.

The Romantic Revival sought after the mediæval spirit—often, it must be admitted, seeking it where it was not. The first or pseudo-classical part of the century used the word ''Gothic'' to signify whatever was repellently bizarre, grotesque, and mediævally ugly; the second or romanticist part of the century used the same word to denote the seductiveness, the mystery, and the glamour of the mediæval past. Gothicism came to be a fad about the time that Horace Walpole, brilliant politician and man of wit, built his famous country house in imitation of a

feudal castle (a very bad piece of architecture, by Ruskin's standard of beauty-in-utility). Walpole also wrote *The Castle of Otranto,* and so became the first to lend fashionable countenance to the tribe of ghosts and apparitions that "squeaked and gibbered" and groaned in musty vaults and dim wind-swept corridors until the time when Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* let in the sunlight of common sense upon them and proved them pasteboard and phosphorus. We wonder now how the poet Gray could have shivered all night over the ghostly mock-heroics of *Otranto,* and especially how he could have owned up to it; we wonder how *The Old English Baron* of Clara Reeve and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* of Mrs. Radcliffe could have set a generation of teeth chattering. To us, these and the other works of their sort mean simply the discontent of the 18th century with its own curtailed imaginative life, its materialistic and rather grossly hearty physical life; it wanted to get out of itself into the past, and any readiest naïve misconception of the past would do.

Nevertheless, the School of Terror, unlike the heroic romance, did lead to something. It left a double legacy, the first and most important half of which was the rationally and nationally historical fiction of Scott. It was but a step from the unreal past peopled with ghosts to the real past peopled with people. Scott, who was very genuinely and painstakingly an antiquarian and archæologist before he was a novelist or even a poet, turned the convention of mediævalism into something other and greater than a conven-

tion. He kept the glamour of the past but not its ghosts; he let that glamour clothe and surround folk who are as real as you or I, and when he wrote about a ghost he was likeliest to do it as a joke—as in *Wandering Willie's Tale*.[1] In short, Scott saved some of the conventions of romance by the amount and kind of faithful realism which he put with them. We give his tales their label of "historical romance" because of the superficial convention by which it is easiest to identify them—very much as it is easiest to identify one's partner at a dance by her clothes. But one enjoys one's partner, at least one does if one is lucky, for her wit or grace or good sense; and we read the tales of Scott because they give us the Crusades, Feudalism, Cavalier and Roundhead, the Covenanters, Scotland, a whole pageant of diversified human nature—in a word, life. Whether it is being lived or has been lived makes little difference: underneath the trappings and the shifting attendant circumstances, it is all of the same stuff. It is the revelation of sameness, not the difference of dress, that counts—and that revelation is, in the profoundest sense, realism.

No need to debate the more minute problem of whether the Middle Ages were actually as Scott portrayed them. They are real enough so that he takes us into them for the sake of what he can show us there; whereas Walpole merely takes us out of the present for the sake of what he cannot show us there. Scott means the rich sufficiency of the historic past; the

[1] In *Redgauntlet*, Letter Eleventh of the Introduction.

School of Terror means the unsatisfying emptiness of the present.

We classify Scott, then, as a romancer, but value and cling to him for his fundamental realism. It is not a thoroughgoing realism; but what there is of it is truth.

This discrepancy in our treatment of Scott brings us to the very important question: How can the accoutrements and the machinery of romance be made to serve a purpose and a meaning essentially realistic? What objective of the great realists do Scott and other romancers find it easier to reach through the convention of their chosen medium, romance? The answer brings us very near to the point where the duality of realism and romance disappears and the two merge.

All great art deals somehow with the strangeness of things. Under the most striking portrait, the most impressionistic interpretation of a landscape, the most fantastic piece of humour, the most intimate and faithful transcription of man's individual or social life, there lies a sense that any aspect of reality has only to be known through and through, or from the right angle, to become seductively mysterious, obscurely wonderful. The better we know things, the more amazing they are. Of this part of the credo of all good imaginative art, there is a consummate expression in the following words by one of America's greatest, and least known, tellers of strange tales:

"It is to him of widest knowledge, of deepest feel-

ing, of sharpest observation and insight, that life is most crowded with figures of heroic stature, with spirits of dream, with demons of the pit, with graves that yawn in pathways leading to the light, with existences not of earth, both malign and benign—ministers of grace and ministers of doom. The truest eye is that which discerns the shadow and the portent, the dead hands reaching, the light that is the heart of the darkness, the sky 'with dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.' The truest ear is that which hears

> 'Celestial voices to the midnight air,
> Sole, or responsive each to the other's note,
> Singing—'

not 'their great Creator,' but not a negro melody, either; no, nor the latest favourite of the drawing-room. In short, he to whom life is not picturesque, enchanting, astonishing, terrible, is denied the gift and faculty divine, and being no poet can write no prose.'' [1]

All the great effects of literature depend on some sort of paradox, surprise, redistribution of emphasis, or re-reading of the obvious and superficial meanings of things. The general message of art is that things are not what they seem; and the temporary formulæ of art are simply this or that man's convenient way of expressing this truth. Realism is the fashionable formula of this hour, romance has been that of some other hours.

[1] *The Opinionator*, pp. 244–5. New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Co., 1911.

Now, it is obvious that the historical romancer finds ready and at his disposal an extraordinary measure of this paradox or inverted emphasis. He finds it in the one most typical and traditional artifice of the historical novel: the subordination of great folk whom we distantly know in history, and the emergence of other folk whom we have never heard of. Richard the Lion-Hearted exists not for Saladin and Limoges, but for Ivanhoe; Savonarola is brought into being, not as revivalist, politician, and martyr, but as a decisive factor in the moral history of Romola; Erasmus the great humanist becomes a little child that we may read the love story of his parents. Great things that we think of ordinarily as having wrought certain great ends exist now for other and lesser ends. And if the revised version in the romance is less true to fact, we know in our hearts that it is much more true to life.

The effect is as that of sudden personal knowledge of a famous man. You idealize him or denounce him, follow his career, vote for him, vote against him, read his books or review them, see him through a mist of his importance and inaccessibility: then you spend a week-end in the same house with him, and find that your personage is after all a person. He reads the Barchester novels once a year, likes to whittle out toys for children with his jack-knife, and thinks your father's old teacher of Roman History was the greatest man he ever met. Your personage has suddenly conferred a mysterious greatness upon ordinary things through their association with him, and humanity upon

himself through his interest in them. Proportion is restored; he is part of the life you know; and for the first time you begin to see him somewhat as he sees himself, and to know what are his real realities.

Some such effect as this comes out of historical novels in which the heroes are other than the heroes of history. Great events and great personages win a sudden new glamour by coming near to us; and little events and persons are magnified by being brought near to *them*. The pulse quickens as the novelist puts us suddenly face to face, by a twist of romantic artifice, with the one strangest yet most familiar thing in the world, the miracle of our common humanity. That swift raising of a veil or an iron mask, the chief trick of our romancer's entire bagful, is accomplished then for a purpose altogether realistic—the revelation of things as they are, and of the strangeness of their being so.

IV

In the face of such considerations, I find it possible to answer in but one way the question whether we value "romantic" fiction most for the romance in it or for the realism. Romance is only a system of conventions; and if only those conventions are present, we do not permanently value the product at all. Great or enduring romance makes use of those conventions for precisely such ends as belong to the realist. Romance concerns, then, the medium, the means and technique, of fiction, and has the least

possible to do with its purpose and meaning. For the sake of convenient categories, we say that the realistic use of remote and unfamiliar material is romance, and that the realistic use of near and familiar material is realism. But this simply means that one writer knows best, as Scott did, the remote and unfamiliar; another, as his contemporary Jane Austen did, the near and familiar. Each travels where he knows the trails; but there is only one destination worth talking about. Speak of "romance" as you will in discussing the how and whence of fiction, you are necessarily talking about realism when you discuss its why, its purpose and meaning. Romance is only a specialized technique; that is, a somewhat circuitous way of getting to a destination. All fiction is truly great in so far as it is realistic in spirit, other things being equal; and there are no true artists but those who are at bottom realists.

So at least we seem to make out when we consult that side of the School of Terror which leads to the historical novel as written by Scott. When we inspect its other legacy, of horror and "spinal shiver," the psychic and the phantasmal, we find again that the mere conventions of romance, in order to save their lives at all, had to be translated into terms of realism. The mediævalism of the School of Terror leads to Scott; the psychic abnormality of the School of Terror leads to Poe and Hawthorne. We shall have traced in our minds the symmetrical curve of the modern ghost story if we see that it had its life

in the realism of *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal,* its romantic death in Walpole and the other Terrorists, and its complete resurrection in such things as *The Turn of the Screw* of Henry James and Ambrose Bierce's tales of the ghostly and the ghastly. This is the complete cycle in outline. The renewal of the psychic begins in England with Charles Robert Maturin, whose *Melmoth the Wanderer* is perhaps oftener referred to than read, though it is still possible to read it with interest. On the Continent, de la Mott-Fouqué and Jean Paul Richter are the names which correspond; that is, the names which imply Poe and Hawthorne a little later. These two American masters are midway of the upward curve. Using indeed the old bottles of supernaturalism and terror, they fill them nevertheless with the new wine of something akin to scientific interpretation. They are halfway back to realism; and it is the infiltration of realism into their romance which makes them live.

It may seem a loose and rather wild classification which puts Poe and Hawthorne together, antithetical as they are at many points—the one a Puritan in inheritance and temperament if not in code, the other as nearly unmoral as human nature can be, and without any moorings in either place or time. But let us see. In their separate ways they are both most absorbed, the one intensely, the other deeply, in the meaning and the results of sin in the individual life, and most preoccupied with the stress and mystery of man's relation with his own heart. The message of both comes to something like the inexorable hounding

of conscience—though Hawthorne is interested in conscience as an agent of the moral law, Poe only as an agent of torture, a screw to be applied to human will until it cracks. One is a moral judge, the other a moral anatomist; but the art of either finds its centre in human sin, its nature and its inevasible consequences. In *The Scarlet Letter,* as Professor Woodberry has said, "sin now staining the soul . . . is the theme; and the course of the story concerns man's dealing with sin, in his own breast or the breasts of others."[1] In *The House of the Seven Gables* the burden of past misdoings presses down upon the life of the present, to render it sinister and futile. " 'Shall we never, never get rid of this law?' " cries Holgrave. " 'It lies upon the Present like a giant's dead body.' " In the earlier of these stories man struggles pettily to evade the consequences of his own sin; in the later, he is foredoomed by ancestral wrongs which are beyond righting.

With Poe, this sense of the omnipresence of evil takes two special forms: first, a tireless interest in that evil perversity of human nature which makes each man, as Oscar Wilde said, "kill the thing he loves" in order to torture his own soul; and, second, a vivid appreciation of the disintegrating effect of remorse upon the sanity. Poe trying to create pure fantasy, as in *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym,* is too jejune for interest; but we remember the Poe who understood the paradox that there is a perverse pleasure in self-

[1] *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (*American Men of Letters Series*), p. 193. By George E. Woodberry. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1902.

inflicted pain, and the truism that no man can long live sanely with the darkest elements of his own nature. And this is Poe the realist.

Both writers falsify the truth of life by suppression of part. Hawthorne expresses the moral rigour of cisatlantic Puritanism, but not its hope of forgiveness and redemption; Poe expresses the soul's capacity for evil and for remorse, but not its capacity for renunciation, noble endeavour, and self-discipline. In both, the abnormal predominates; but so far as they continue to be read on their merits as authors, not merely for their prestige as classics, they are read because the abnormality which they portrayed is actually there, a pervasive and inescapable part of life. Their artificial suppressions and their lack of actual knowledge of what life is may together cost them length of literary life; but while they live at all, they live because they traced human impulse and motive inward to dark secret sources.

Starting then with the two chiefly romantic impulses of the School of Terror, mediævalism and psychic horror, we find that each saves itself by becoming transmuted into something else which is not ultimately romantic at all; and that the amount of salvation is just about in proportion to the amount of realism acquired. The vague Gothicism of the 18th century becomes the true historical sense of Scott; its monsters become the balanced human beings of Scott; its apparitions turn into the spectres of old sins come back to prey on the soul; its re-echoing ghostly voices become conscience. The historical novel explores

widely and freely among outward realities of space and past time; the fiction of Poe and Hawthorne explores deeply within, subjecting the heart and the brain to analysis of whatever is most corrosive there. Still other strata of our fiction have demonstrably this same romantic foundation; but they all alike abandon more and more the strangeness of life as it is not for the still greater strangeness of life as it is.

V

Perhaps we have come too long a way round for so simple a result. It is obvious enough *a priori* that all fiction is based on life, and that the worth of the fiction is contingent on the fulness and truth of the vision of life. Fulness and truth in the vision, these are the chief tests of a great realism; and if great realism happen to fall in a romantic school or vogue, that makes ultimately but little difference. The realist loves life, as his own eye sees it, too well to miss any of the savour of its actuality; he whom we call a romancer loves life too well not to array it in fine vestures, shape it to the mould of a heroic tradition, and make it trail clouds of glory. This is the unimportant and passing difference. But they both love life. That is the essential similarity; and it is more important than any difference.

If then we come upon a piece of literature which distorts the nature of life, we shall have to call it bad literature; that is, non-realistic literature. For the

test of realism, which is the test of excellence, is fidelity to the nature of life. Romance is a kind of realism which undertakes to reveal the nature of life while claiming, perhaps, some licence in its handling of the mere facts of life. Realism undertakes to be faithful both to the nature and the facts of life, and needs, as we have seen, to discharge both of its responsibilities. If what we call romance distort both the facts and the nature of life, it fails and dies; and the meaning of its failure is not that it was bad romance, recreant to facts, but that it was bad realism, recreant to the truth which is above the facts.

I have meant not so much to deny the difference between realism and romance as to belittle its significance. There *is* a difference; and it is of some incidental importance to the novelist that he shall be in the vogue of his generation, for the fashion is prodigiously important to the commerce between producer and public, and many a romancer has missed his mark by using a sort of ammunition which went with older firearms, long superseded. But we are speaking of the target; and here, we insist, the white is one thing and one only—the truth and the meaning of life as men and women live it.

Consider, for an illustration and a test, a page of Scott, from *A Legend of Montrose*. Angus M'Aulay has dined in London at the house of Sir Miles Musgrave, where were put on the table six candlesticks of solid silver; and Angus, touched in his Scotsman's local pride, has sworn that he has "mair candlesticks, and better candlesticks, in his ain castle at hame, than

were ever lighted in a hall in Cumberland,'' and has backed up his oath by the wager of a sum which he does not possess. Behold the outcome, in the Scottish halls of M'Aulay:—

''Donald, as they were speaking, entered, with rather a blither face than he might have been expected to wear, considering the impending fate of his master's purse and credit. 'Gentlemens, her dinner is ready, *and her candles are lighted too,*' said Donald, with a strong guttural emphasis on the last clause of his speech.

'' 'What the devil can he mean?' said Musgrave, looking to his countryman.

''Lord Menteith put the same question with his eyes to the Laird, which M'Aulay answered by shaking his head.

''A short dispute about precedence somewhat delayed their leaving the apartment. Lord Menteith insisted upon yielding up that which belonged to his rank, on consideration of his being in his own country, and of his near connection with the family in which they found themselves. The two English strangers, therefore, were first ushered into the hall, where an unexpected display awaited them. The large oaken table was spread with substantial joints of meat, and seats were placed in order for the guests. Behind every seat stood a gigantic Highlander, completely dressed, and armed after the fashion of his country, holding in his right hand his drawn sword, with the point turned downwards, and in the left a blazing torch made of the bog-pine. This wood, found in the

morasses, is so full of turpentine, that when split and dried, it is frequently used in the Highlands instead of candles. The unexpected and somewhat startling apparition was seen by the red glare of the torches, which displayed the wild features, unusual dress, and glittering [swords?] of those who bore them, while the smoke, eddying up to the roof of the hall, overcanopied them with a volume of vapour. Ere the strangers had recovered from their surprise, Allan stepped forward, and pointing with his sheathed broadsword to the torch-bearers, said, in a deep and stern tone of voice, 'Behold, gentlemen cavaliers, the chandeliers of my brother's house, the ancient fashion of our ancient name; not one of these men knows any law but their chief's command—Would you dare to compare to THEM in value the richest ore that ever was dug out of the mine? How say you, cavaliers?—is your wager won or lost?'

"'Lost, lost,' said Musgrave gayly—'my own silver candlesticks are all melted and riding on horseback by this time, and I wish the fellows that enlisted were half as trusty as these.—Here, sir,' he added to the chief, 'is your money; it impairs Hall's finances and mine somewhat, but debts of honour must be settled.'

"'My father's curse upon my father's son,' said Allan, interrupting him, 'if he receives from you one penny! It is enough that you claim no right to exact from him what is his own.'

"Lord Menteith eagerly supported Allan's opinion, and the elder M'Aulay readily joined, declaring the whole to be a fool's business, and not worth speaking

more about. The Englishmen, after some courteous opposition, were persuaded to regard the whole as a joke.

"'And now, Allan,' said the Laird, 'please to remove your candles; for, since the Saxon gentlemen have seen them, they will eat their dinner as comfortably by the light of the old tin sconces, without scomfishing them with so much smoke.'

"Accordingly, at a sign from Allan, the living chandeliers, recovering their broadswords, and holding the point erect, marched out of the hall, and left the guests to enjoy their refreshments."[1]

There are all the trappings of the romantic, including the deliberate effort to work the scene up to a heightened intensity which is to fiction what eloquence is to speech. But in what is the chief effect? Is it in the picturesqueness, the ornate and martial machinery of the episode, the stage fittings, or even in the triumph of the character who enlists our sympathy—this last one of the major conventions of romance? Or is it in the loyalty of the brother who has contrived the ruse, the most human joy of the aged servitor in his master's triumph and the opponent's discomfiture, the debonair and courtly grace of the good loser, and above all the ringing truth behind the whole affair, that metals are dross when weighed in the balance against men? In these latter things, to be sure; and so always in such scenes involving artificially heightened effects, if they are successful.

[1] *A Legend of Montrose*, Chapter Fourth.

The novelist's loyalty to life varies (shall we say?) as man's love for woman. The realist is the indulgent lover who would have his mistress as she is, who feels that any change would be a loss, because it would interfere with her identity, make her less completely herself. Your romancer is the passionate lover who cannot bear that his mistress should be in any wise less than his thought of her; he covets for her all good things, sees in her all possibilities; he wants her to be, not exactly someone else, but as it were more intensely and exclusively herself. He is like a man who exaggerates the truth for sheer love of the truth. To borrow and adapt a phrase, the romancer exaggerates life in the direction of itself. But both realist and romancer must be impersonal: they must love life, and not merely themselves. The historical novel must take us out of the present because there is so much for us in the past—not simply to take us out of the present. If what the romancer provides be only an easy way of emotional escape, then he is serving, not the True Romance, but only a shallow, vain, and egoistic spirit which we call by another and less honourable name. Between that lesser spirit and clean romance, or clean realism either, there is, as we shall see, implacable war. But there is no war between romance and realism, any more than there is between true science and true religion.

III

SENTIMENTALISM

I

On some sort of love for the nature of life rests, then, all sound romance, all sound realism. There are many kinds of love. The novelist may love life as a mistress "uncertain, coy, and hard to please," but worth the knowing and the serving for all that, and on her own terms; he may be in two minds whether to idealize her at a distance or to defy disenchantment in the nearest intimacy, like Meredith's lover who

"Fain would fling the net, and fain have her free";

or he may trust and give himself completely up to her, in the sure knowledge that, though she may both "bruise and bless," he can have the full blessing only as he accepts the bruises. There are many kinds of love: but, for the novelist, only this one mistress. And his fundamental loyalty to life is the same whether he tend to interpret life realistically or to exalt it romantically.

Now, it happens, as I have just hinted, that the romantic novelist is the more subject to a certain grave temptation or danger: the danger of substituting self-love for love of life, and of interpreting the world exclusively as a ministry to self-delight. Professor Irving Babbitt characterizes the romantic lover in poetry by comparing him, in the terms of a not too celebrated *mot*, to the domestic cat which

rubs its body against your leg: the cat does not love you, it "loves itself *on* you." So the romantic lover may prize his mistress, not for what she is, but for her reflection of him, her subtle and unanalysable appeal to his own vanity—or to his own humility, which may be only his vanity inverted. And so the novelist may, if there be too little of the impersonal in his fibre, love himself on life, and give us, for all his and our pains, not so much a reading of what life is or may be as an exhibition of his own private needs and greeds, predilections and aversions, prides and shames. He may part company with the realist, who says: "This is beauty, because it is truth," and with the romancer, who says: "This is truth, because it is beauty";—he may part company with both, and say tacitly no more than "This is what I enjoy." In short, he may let himself be animated by that shallow, vain, and egoistic spirit which we call sentimentalism; the spirit which produces a counterfeit idealism, a spurious realism, compound of self plus emotion. Because the romancer has a freer hand with the circumstances, and is less rigidly bound by what he sees before his eyes, he is the more likely to stumble into this pitfall of self; and that is why we may call the spirit of sentimentalism an underbred country cousin of romance.

Sentimentalism, a sickly and corrosive thing, is enormously important in the history of literature, and especially of British literature; so important that almost any episode of the development of our fiction might be recounted as a struggle of sentimentalism

against its counter-agents. He who should undertake to tell the history of sentimentalism in the novel would stand committed to a complete history of the novel; for in each generation the sentimental spirit is so enlaced with the general evolution of fiction that there is no story left to tell except that of the sentimental spirit in its struggle to survive against strong opposition. Everything that is not for sentimentalism is against it, and has been so ever since, in the tremendous decade which gave the English novel its modern shape, Richardson sentimentalized his way into the popular heart and Fielding took up the pen of satire to drive him out. The clash between *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* recurs, in one way or another, from decade to decade—not so spectacularly perhaps, because hardly ever again with so near an approach to equality between the contenders, but nevertheless demonstrably and implacably. The man of feeling and the man of reflection have their truces; hardly, as yet, a permanent peace.

Sentimentalism is, however, somewhat more than feeling. If it had to do merely with displays of sensibility, the exhibition of tender and often neurotic emotions inadequately grounded in ideas, the story of it might be a long one, but it could hardly be a very subtle one. The anatomist of the sentimental cultus beholds his real difficulty when he notes that sentimentalism is interpenetrated with other substances, many of them the most respectable, and that some of its manifestations are of a sort to counterfeit whatever we most prize in motive and conduct. Senti-

mentalism is, indeed, to begin with, a saturation with sensibility, the very dew-point of the emotional. But that is only the beginning of it. After we have taken sufficient account of sentimentalism as hyperæsthesia, we find other expressions of it past numbering.

Of these others, I may single out four, as being perhaps the most important here, through their prevalence in literature.—

First, the spirit of self-righteousness. The self-righteous man may indeed love good conduct; but it is his own good conduct that he loves, and more because it is his own than because it is good. This is the spirit that pities the sinful because they are so far beneath us who pity them—we think how wretched we should be in their place. It is also the spirit that philanthropizes and confers benefits through self-love. To give material succour is to bask in the glow of one's own goodness—and it is so easy to purchase merit thus!

Secondly, the spirit of vanity or grandiloquence or bombast. Mr. Chesterton has arraigned one of its modern tricks in a little essay called *Demagogues and Mystagogues*.[1] This is the spirit that identifies one's self in a proprietary way with one's profession or one's special interests. Fielding's doctors quarrel learnedly together about how the arm should be set, while the patient lies in torture, and dispute over the corpse to settle which killed him, because their own dignity must be upheld whatever becomes of the sci-

[1] In *All Things Considered*. By G. K. Chesterton. New York: John Lane Co. MCMIX.

ence of medicine; lawyers deliver their paid opinions in a jargon which none can understand, because their own majesty comes above that of the law; the schoolmaster talks about education as though he were its patron saint, the dilettante about art as though it were a helpless orphan committed to his care, and the clergyman about God as though he were a benevolent and rather more responsible elderly relative of God—say, a maiden aunt. An inflated, puffed-up spirit this, that tries to dignify itself by ownership of that which is beyond any personal ownership.

Thirdly, the self-deception which we call hypocrisy. For probably any consistent hypocrite is essentially a self-deceiver. No man can dispense in the long run with belief in himself; and hence he misreads his own motives, forgets whatever would confute him if he remembered it, and invents the most plausibly unselfish motives for his self-seeking. The young lady continues to enjoy her roast lamb and be horrified at the trade of butchering, and thinks quite well of herself in both connections; Theobald and Christina—I am referring here to Samuel Butler's posthumous classic *The Way of All Flesh*—continue to torture their son, out of a dubious mixture of self-righteousness, innate love of cruelty, and the sense of their own power and authority, and persuade themselves that they are doing it all for the good of the son.

Fourthly, the spirit of shallow optimism, that sees everything in a beautiful mist of "rose-pink" (Meredith's word); that is always talking about "the sordid things of life" (meaning things which are not pretty);

that creates all the scores of sugar-plum-angel men, women, and children—especially children, the Sandfords and Little Evas and Pollyannas of sentimental fiction, precocious infants with a diseased passion for making you cheerful and good:—the spirit that says tacitly, "This is the world *I* made: see how much nicer it is than that dismal real world of obstinate facts and problems without solutions! If you don't like *my* world better than that, it must be that you have an evil, sordid mind."

These four spirits—self-righteousness, vanity, hypocrisy, and the fashionable optimism—are all sentimental: they all set up the first person singular as above the impersonal law of life, and study the world, if they study it at all, only to project themselves into it for the self-satisfied thrill of rediscovering themselves there. The sentimentalist will actually inflict pain on himself for the pleasure of seeing himself bear it heroically; he will tempt others into despitefully using and persecuting him, in order to anoint himself with the soothing oils of righteous indignation and self-pity. The peculiar insidiousness of this sentimentalism is, in fact, that it nearly always concerns itself with well-meaning and well-doing, and by its fruits it is at times well-nigh indistinguishable from the most self-disciplined and impersonal rule of life.

II

It will be seen that these subtler manifestations of sentimentalism are here defined as simply effects of

the egoism inherent in man, and with little or no reference to the goodness or badness of the actual conduct involved or advocated. And the definition will, I think, do all that may be asked of it. Sentimentalism is primarily not a sort of conduct, but a sort of spirit behind conduct; and the same acts may be prompted now by a sentimental attitude, again by a really humane or social spirit. Emerson's precept, "Love and you shall be loved: all love is as mathematically just as the two sides of an algebraic equation," is a most unsentimental argument for loving much, but a most whiningly sentimental argument for demanding to be loved. The shilling may be dropped into a beggar's hat to afford the giver enjoyment of his own munificence, or to do penance for a previous sin of greed, or to avoid the self-accusation of stinginess (all sentimental motives), or to express one's understanding sympathy for another life that thus becomes, if only for an instant and a shilling's worth, one's own. It is the same shilling in any case—but it does not mean the same thing. And of course fiction is bound to be concerned above all with what it means.

At this point some close analyst of motive takes the floor to ask whether there is not, behind all these distinctions, a fundamental sameness. Whatever we do, and whyever we do it, does not every motive originate in self, and does not every act proceed out of the individual's instinct for self-fulfilment? One man despoils the poor to increase his own wealth: another gives out of what he has, ostensibly to help the poor:

but is not this merely a more refined and sensitive selfishness, the very quintessence in fact of self-gratification? To which we must return, for all answer: "Yes, we do indeed at every turn that which we have the most and the strongest reasons for *wanting* to do. There is no unselfishness in the sense of acts which profit us nothing, materially or morally. But that fact does not abolish the infinite gradations in the rewards of our conduct. It is precisely of those gradations that the novelist, if he be worthy, must take most account. All conduct does originate in self; but it does not all end there. Let the novelist look to it that he express his own will in conduct which takes the self outward into other lives; which identifies the ego with other egos, and reaches across the barriers of selfhood to some sort of community." In short, there is a self that expresses itself in terms of self, with reference always inward; there is another self that has the outward reference, expressing itself by instinct and habit in terms of other things—and this second self is an entity much better worth expressing. It is the non-sentimental ego. Let the novelist understand it, and be it, we say; else his appeal to us is of the shallowest. A. murders B.; C. gives his life trying to save B. from A. Call both acts self-fulfilment, as ultimately they are: all we need point out is that it makes a great deal of difference what kind of self you have to fulfil, and that the novelist does well to choose discriminatingly which he shall hold up to our esteem.

Or, to illustrate the same matter in historical terms:—

Richardson was the sentimentalist incarnate. Fielding was the satirist. In *Pamela* Richardson portrayed a somewhat prudish servant girl resisting the attempts of her libertine master to seduce her, and at last, by having the good sense to keep herself inaccessible, winning his hand in marriage. Her conduct is right; her motive a rather low expediency—the virtue, not of brave and thoughtful idealism, but of convention added to fear. That the element of expediency figures largely in her conduct is proved by her slavish adulation of Mr. B. when he offers her marriage. He has behaved monstrously to her, made himself loathsome to the sense of decency—and yet when his offers cease to be "illicit" Pamela can only cry out in melting gratitude at his angelic condescension. One is reminded of John Tanner's sarcastic retort to Octavius: "So we are to marry your sister to a damned scoundrel by way of reforming her character!"—both Octavius and Richardson being victims of the old sentimental confusion of "character" with "reputation." Pamela shares with them a tawdry superstition that it is vile for a coward and sneak to possess a noble woman in one way, but eminently praiseworthy and satisfactory for him to possess her in another. John Tanner and Fielding share the somewhat different notion that it is detestable for a coward and sneak to possess a noble woman at all, and that if she is really noble she will see him for

what he is, and despise him as much when he grovels before her as when he tries to dominate her by trickery or force. Fielding took Richardson's theme and turned it into ridicule by inversion. He portrayed a young serving-man who resists the advances of his wanton mistress—not in order to advocate laxity of conduct against Richardson's narrow rigidity, but to extinguish with burlesque a moralist who advocated the narrowest rigidity for the most dubious reasons. Both novelists would have Pamela guard herself well: but one of them would have her do it for reasons which prove her a sensible creature with a taint of canny self-righteousness, the other for reasons which prove her a noble woman of some capacity to think for herself. The really dramatic crux of living is not in conduct but in motive.

Now, it is true that Fielding savours his own satire just as much as Richardson does his own sentimentalism, and that both are equally far from philosophical disinterestedness. But one finds his delight in a philosophy which makes human nature out a pretty small and mean affair, even when it is doing right; the other, in a philosophy which shows human nature as having an infinite capacity for constructive good, even when it is doing wrong. *Pamela* is "Virtue Rewarded," with the insistence on the reward; *Joseph Andrews* is "Virtue Rewarded," with the insistence on the virtue. If the conventional code is to recommend itself to the most humane minds, it must do so on some such basis as Fielding's, not on egoistic, self-seeking, and sentimental grounds. Safety and

profit are sentimental motives for behaving well: good behaviour finds its true level only in a defiant rightness of the mind to which self-violation is the unbearable wrong.

This difference of motive—the difference, let us call it, between sentimentalism and fine taste—is, I repeat, all-important to the worker in fiction. He will have expressed, when all the words are written down and all the situations resolved, only himself: let him not think he can escape himself utterly, for all the words and all the situations will be of his choice, charged with the meanings which he alone has given them, indicative of his purposes and ideals. But let him express himself in terms of other things, of ideals which touch more than his self-interest; let him be like the bank-note that changes hands only to reappear as its own worth of food or clothing or firewood, not like the coin in a miser's hoard, which can only draw to itself more and more other precisely similar coins, endless vain repetitions of itself, to be gloated over in moments of sterile ecstasy.

III

Of course I should not wish to be understood as trying to read Samuel Richardson, by bell and book, out of his importance to the history of the novel. If I undertook that, I should expect no better reward than laughter. The literature which makes up the whole body of a tradition and an art, and which is

therefore greater than individuals and their books, has never required that flawlessness which the most exactingly critical readers think it well to demand of their book before they will consent to be much interested in it. No: literature has never been above teaching itself by poor beginnings, the half-suggestion of merit here, even the downright failure there; and in the long run the worth of most things is found to survive, or at least to be rediscovered, in order that art may learn every important lesson that exists to be learned. Richardson is very far indeed from such feeble and half-profitless beginnings, matter merely for instruction to the form of the novel after his actual substance has been found wanting and cast away. Indeed, he stands much nearer to the full success, the triumphant achievement of his own kind of greatness.

That greatness lies, so far as a sentence will describe it, in his having done for the inner world of the heart what Defoe did for the outer world of material circumstance: subjected it to the analysis of a minute and painstaking realism, anatomized it at once more truly and more vividly than any before him had done. Richardson is the first in the novel to prove that moral or mental history can be truly dramatic, and that any life, even the most commonplace, can be made, if only it is understood, to yield the reader finer thrills than had hitherto come from even the most exciting stories of event.

There is a sense too in which Richardson is impersonal like the dramatist, and therefore escapes direct responsibility for the opinions which his characters

hold and express; for his stories are told in letters exchanged by the characters participating in them, and no one questions that in the main the letters express genuine and natural reactions of folk who are real, permanent, and very much themselves. But the novelist and the dramatist cannot escape *indirect* responsibility: after all, they are undertaking to represent life for us, and if their characters represent it only, or primarily, at and below a certain moral altitude, we shall properly say that their conception of life is insufficient. The artist chooses his puppets because they are interesting to him; and we have the right to say, if we find it so, that he is relatively too much interested in the wrong ones, the ones who are beneath the best that we know. Richardson speaks in the long run through Pamela just as intelligibly as though she were empowered to speak directly for him; and we hardly need the various prefaces and conclusions by the "Editor" to tell us that he was exactly the sentimentalist his choice and treatment of Pamela as a heroine would imply. It was a tremendous achievement, and an influential one, to have read the hearts of others, and those not of his sex, so minutely as Richardson did: nevertheless, we cannot acquit him of having sentimentally taken those hearts at more than their true relative worth, or of having sentimentally preached a dubious ethic—superior conduct for inferior reasons.

How certainly the novel can be trusted in the end to perpetuate its best and discard its worst is shown by an odd fact in the history of appreciation of Rich-

ardson. His reputation waxed and waned and waxed again, and has now, it seems to me as I gather the consensus of recent judgments, all but regained its old prestige—and that in spite of our unanimous hatred of his sentimentalism. First he was valued for this quality, then he was despised for it, and now he is valued in spite of it, and because of his sympathetic and minute analysis. Our least sentimental age has vindicated Richardson, one of the most sentimental of novelists, thus proving abundantly that there is more in him than the sentimentalism, and that the composite intelligence of criticism over any great stretch of time has a sure and single eye for merit, with whatever defects that merit is accompanied.

But it was the sentimentalism that came uppermost at the beginning; and if the author of *Clarissa* had a beneficial effect on the novel as an instrument of constantly increasing scope, I do not see how we can blink the fact that he had a disastrous effect on it as a revelation and criticism of the true values of life. I cannot give up my distrust of sentimentalism merely because Richardson, the chief of sentimentalists, happened also to be an incomparable anatomist of motive and feeling; and I see him as one of the chief impulses in the debilitating 18th century cult of "sensibility."

As we have noted before, half of the æsthetic history of the two generations after Richardson is implied in the word "Gothic" and the changes its meaning underwent. The other half is contained in this

other word "sensibility," which points to whatever in emotion is overwrought, hyperæsthetic, neurasthenic, and at the same time super-refined and faddling. The School of Terror is simply Gothicism plus sensibility; and Richardson, a realist of the realists, is thus, through his emotionalism, a powerful impulse toward one of the most extravagant romantic traditions ever evolved. The cult of sensibility means always the maximum of feeling for the minimum of cause; and when we see the Terrorists displaying the last extremities of feeling for no cause that we can do better than laugh at, we see them reaping the natural harvest of Richardson the specialist in self-pity and tears. He set a whole age weeping, not for sorrow, not even for romantic *Weltschmerz,* but for simple enjoyment of its own shallow and rather maudlin wretchedness. It was an age comparable in this respect to the boarding-school miss who feels herself cheated and taken advantage of if she is not made to cry at the matinée. She goes in order to cry; and the latter 18th century sometimes strikes us as having existed primarily in order to feel, over anything or nothing, the extremes of emotion.

Not since that time, happily, have we seen sentimentalism in anything like the same repute. The prolonged battle between the man of feeling and the man of reflection seems at last on the verge of decision in favour of the man of reflection. One of the greatest of living novelists, himself anything but a disciple of Richardson and sensibility, alludes quite naturally to "the *unofficial* sentimentalism, which, like the poor,

is exceedingly difficult to get rid of."[1] A century ago he would have had to call sentimentalism official instead of unofficial. It has never died: it has simply receded farther and farther into the underworld of the unsanctioned in art. From time to time it puts forth powerful reminders of its hold on the popular imagination: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is one of those reminders, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* another. Mrs. Stowe and Sir Walter Besant, in other stories the most guileless and innocuous of sentimentalists, attain in these two books the special prestige of successful reformers. But elsewhere we see the sentimental religion disintegrate into a dozen specialized and disunited rituals—let them be illustrated by the juvenile fiction of "Oliver Optic" and the not so consciously juvenile formulæ of E.-P.-Roe-ism. In general, it may be said that the sentimental novel had pretty well given up its claim to official status when it went into paper covers about the year 1875; and there it was contentedly to stay until Mrs. Florence Barclay and Mrs. Alice Hegan Rice and half a dozen other purveyors of blessedness, mostly feminine, brought it back for a moment to the factitious dignity of cloth.

IV

The official death of sentimentalism is of course very different from its extermination—which is even

[1] Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus."* By Joseph Conrad. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1914. P. xii.

now only a possibility. If one had to fix a date for its official death, I suppose that date might well be 1814, the year of *Waverley*. But the edict of execution had been already signed, in the work of an inconspicuous young woman of twenty-three—the most precocious genius in our fiction, for she had written at twenty-one a novel all but perfect in both the form and the substance of its contribution to the human comedy. In 1798, the year of the *Lyrical Poems and Ballads* and a great milestone in romanticism, Jane Austen was writing her third novel, *Northanger Abbey,* in which she took the spurious romanticism of the School of Terror and made it ridiculous. For her sunny common sense, perhaps neither public nor publisher was ready: at all events *Northanger Abbey* lay neglected for twenty years, wasting its diffusion of light on the proverbial bottom drawer, like priceless radium in the heart of the earth waiting to be discovered. Written sixteen years before the publication of *Waverley,* it appeared four years after, and two after Jane Austen's death—the first of her stories to bear her name on its title-page.

In all six of those stories Miss Austen made merry with sentimentalism; witness the title *Sense and Sensibility* (i. e., Sense *versus* Sensibility). But nowhere is her kindly and indulgent ridicule more telling than in an early episode of *Northanger Abbey.* The heroine, a girl potentially sensible but saturated with romances of the School of Radcliffe, goes in a properly sentimental mood to visit friends at Northanger Abbey. She is eager in her anticipation of the

ghostly, the grisly; her visit will be a complete fiasco unless she is treated to at least an apparition or two. Everything goes promisingly. She is shown on the first night to a room in a wing of the Abbey; her imagination makes it baronially large, gloomy; the wind howling at the casements and down the chimney does what it can to make up for the footsteps of the ancient servitor which should reverberate down the long corridor; and—yes, actually there is the one indispensable appurtenance of such situations, a dark and formidable cabinet of immemorial age. It is there, of course, that she is to find the time-yellowed manuscript which is to unlock some horrifying secret of the past. And, tucked away in a recess, is indeed the roll of papers. She seizes it with tremors of expectancy; in another instant she will have begun to unravel the secret. Then, a clumsy attempt to snuff her candle puts it out and leaves her in utter darkness. Better and better! She lies shivering in the great bed, a prey to nameless delicious terrors until sleep comes. With the morning light that awakens her, she is up to consummate her discovery. Let Jane Austen tell it:—

"Her greedy eye glanced rapidly over a page. She started at its import. Could it be possible, or did not her senses play her false? An inventory of linen, in coarse and modern characters, seemed all that was before her! If the evidence of sight might be trusted, she held a washing-bill in her hand. She seized another sheet, and saw the same articles with little variation; a third, a fourth, and a fifth pre-

sented nothing new. Shirts, stockings, cravats, and waistcoats faced her in each. Two others, penned by the same hand, marked an expenditure scarcely more interesting, in letters, hair-powder, shoe-string, and breeches-ball. And the larger sheet, which had enclosed the rest, seemed by its first cramp line, 'To poultice chestnut mare,' a farrier's bill! Such was the collection of papers (left, perhaps, as she could then suppose, by the negligence of a servant in the place whence she had taken them), which had filled her with expectation and alarm, and robbed her of half her night's rest! She felt humbled to the dust. Could not the adventure of the chest have taught her wisdom? A corner of it catching her eye as she lay, seemed to rise up in judgment against her. Nothing could now be clearer than the absurdity of her recent fancies. To suppose that a manuscript of many generations back could have remained undiscovered in a room such as that, so modern, so habitable! or that she should be the first to possess the skill of unlocking a cabinet, the key of which was open to all!''[1]

No example could show more clearly the war between sensibility and the sense of humour. Comedy is in fact the chief weapon against sentimentalism, and the one against which sentimentalism is least likely to prevail. There is more than accidental fitness in this simple fact: that Richardson, the most sentimental of all the great English writers of fiction, is the only one of them who is not a humourist. Name them over: Defoe, a master of both rough

[1] *Northanger Abbey*, Chapter XXII.

farce and droll characterization; Fielding and Thackeray, master ironists; Dickens, a supreme creator of comic individuals—a master capable indeed of maudlin sentimentality, but only in moments of conspicuous lapse; Scott, George Eliot, and Hardy, masters of regional humour, the deep unconscious drollery of peasant folk; Smollett, a dealer in coarse rough rollicking fun; Meredith, who looked on the face of the Truly Comic Muse, seen of few men;—all belong in the list, except Richardson the lugubrious. Sentimentalism cannot stand in the presence of "clean mirth."

Neither, if we are to judge by Sterne, can it stand in the presence of mirth sometimes unclean. For the invariable process of Sterne, as I understand it, is to take the materials of sensibility and turn them, by a subtle infusion of burlesque, into infectious and sometimes obscene drollery. The very familiar episode of Uncle Toby and the fly is sometimes seriously quoted as a piece of sensibility expressive of the age and identifying Sterne with the Richardsonian cult in its reduction to absurdity. But surely with Sterne it was a *conscious* reduction to absurdity: surely, in this very passage, he deliberately burlesques, making sensibility poke fun at itself:—

"My uncle *Toby* was a man patient of injuries;—not from want of courage,—I have told you in a former chapter, 'that he was a man of courage':—And will add here, that where just occasion presented, or called it forth,—I know no man under whose arm I would have sooner taken shelter;—nor did this arise

from any insensibility or obtuseness of his intellectual parts;—for he felt this insult of my father's as feelingly as a man could do;—but he was of a peaceful, placid nature,—no jarring element in it,—all was mixed up so kindly within him; my uncle *Toby* had scarce a heart to retaliate upon a fly.

"—Go—says he, one day at dinner, to an overgrown one which had buzzed about his nose, and tormented him cruelly all dinner-time,—and which after infinite attempts, he had caught at last, as it flew by him;—I'll not hurt thee, says my uncle *Toby*, rising from his chair, and going across the room, with the fly in his hand,—I'll not hurt a hair of thy head:—Go, says he, lifting up the sash, and opening his hand as he spoke, to let it escape;—go, poor devil, get thee gone, why should I hurt thee?—This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me.

"I was but ten years old when this happened: but whether it was, that the action itself was more in unison to my nerves at that age of pity, which instantly set my whole frame into one vibration of most pleasurable sensation;—or how far the manner and expression of it might go towards it;—or in what degree, or by what secret magick,—a tone of voice and harmony of movement, attuned by mercy, might find a passage to my heart, I know not;—this I know, that the lesson of universal good-will then taught and imprinted by my uncle *Toby*, has never since been worn out of my mind: And tho' I would not depreciate what the study of the *Literæ humaniores*, at the university, have done for me in that respect, or

discredit the other helps of an expensive education bestowed upon me, both at home and abroad since; —yet I often think that I owe one half of my philanthropy to that one accidental impression.

"☞ This is to serve for parents and governors instead of a whole volume upon the subject." [1]

Here, as throughout *Tristram Shandy* and, for that matter, *A Sentimental Journey,* one sees the spirit of comedy as the great infallible corrective of hysteria, the dismally emotional side of that sentimentalism which takes itself so seriously. It needs but to be taken with a grain of mirth, to dissolve away into the empty pretentiousness it is.

V

These few sketchy data will serve well enough to show what sentimentalism is, and how its arch-enemy the spirit of laughter puts it out of countenance. Sentimentalism is a solemn spirit, and flourishes only in places not reached by the light of mirth. So much at least is clear if we speak in terms of the sharpest contrast available: that between the obvious 18th century sentimentalism of extreme sensibility and the equally obvious forms of comedy which undertook to destroy it. The sensibility is as abnormal and perverted as the laughter is hearty, genuine, side-splitting, or gross. One is like the odor of musk, the other like the sound of a drinking song.

[1] *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,* Book II, Chapter XII.

But there remain the more subtle and complicated manifestations of sentimentalism: and for these, only a more subtle weapon of Comedy will serve. Because it fell to Meredith to create in English that subtler instrument and its first triumphant applications in story, and because he made the first nice and permanent definition of such Comedy, our doctrine here can best be reproduced from his *Essay on the Idea of Comedy and of the Uses of the Comic Spirit.*

Comedy means to Meredith the "laughter of the mind." "The laughter of Comedy is impersonal and unrivalled politeness, nearer a smile [i. e., than Satire, which is "a blow in the back or the face"]; often no more than a smile. It laughs through the mind, for the mind directs it; and it might be called the humour of the mind." Meredith draws his distinctions with the greatest possible nicety among Satire, Irony, Humour, and Comedy—overlapping elements, of course, but differently centred. And of Comedy he makes two most important generalizations:—

First, it is inherently and essentially social. "The Comic poet is in the narrow field, or enclosed square, of the society he depicts; and he addresses the still narrower enclosure of men's intellects, with reference to the operation of the social world upon their characters. He is not concerned with beginnings or endings or surroundings, but with what you are now weaving. To understand his work and value it, you must have a sober liking of your own kind and a sober estimate of our civilized qualities." One remembers at this point that the self-righteousness, the vanity, the

hypocrisy, and the frivolous optimism which I named as belonging in the calendar of sentimentalism, are all intensely egoistic or anti-social failings. Thus this Comedy of Meredith is just the heaven-inspired scourge for them.

Second, since Comedy is a social implement, it is practicable only in some approximation of a real society. Only the rougher tools of irony and satire will do where a society is struggling into existence, or going through the period of muddle. "There are plain reasons why the Comic poet is not a frequent apparition; and why the great Comic poet remains without a fellow. A society of cultivated men and women is required, wherein ideas are current and the perceptions quick, that he may be supplied with matter and an audience. The semi-barbarism of merely giddy communities, and feverish emotional periods, repel him; and also a state of marked social inequality of the sexes; nor can he whose business is to address the mind be understood where there is not a moderate degree of intellectual activity."

This second prerequisite of true Comedy, a real society, explains several traits in the Meredith who formulates it. It explains, first, his tendency toward feminism, his faith in the illimitable capacity of woman to take her place as equal of the greatest—a belief which he constantly enforces in his novels by showing the triumph of noble womanhood over what is weakest, most sentimental in man. "Where the veil is thrown over women's faces, you cannot have society, without which the senses are barbarous and the Comic spirit is

driven to the gutters of grossness to slake its thirst'' —as, for example, in our excellent and indispensable 18th century. It is for ''cultivated women to recognize that the Comic Muse is one of their best friends. They are blind to their interests in swelling the ranks of the sentimentalists.''

Also, does not this same prerequisite of an urbane and matured society explain the smallness of Meredith's public, and the more and more specialized narrowness of the scenes in which he elected to work? It is pretty clear from his general doctrine that he had visions of a time, perhaps remote, when comedy should have become a national institution, as accessible and as democratic as any form of national art has ever been; a time when the reciprocity of comic poet and audience should become all that the most sanguine imagination could conceive, using Aristophanes, Congreve, Molière, and their several publics as points of departure. We misconceive Meredith entirely if we doubt that in such a state of reciprocity he would have been most at home, ideally self-fulfilled. His idea of creativeness was not to be eccentric, mannered, aristocratic: it was to work in a democratic tradition, a school, and what he most laments is the unreadiness of the existing public for a democratic tradition that should be at the same time fine, stimulating, and bracing as well as democratic. As it was, the conditions gave him neither the society for audience nor the society for subject. He believed sufficiently in his vision to write for the few readers who had something of his own comic intuition—not because he prized his

own rarity, but because he wanted to help leaven the whole mass. He wrote about the few small social groups which met his definition of real intercourse, not because he wanted to idealize an aristocracy, but because he wanted to democratize an ideal. Presently he realized, at first with dismay, the smallness of his public. It was then that his style became so specialized: only a few could follow him, but those few could follow him anywhere, and he saw it as his peculiar office to do the most that he could for them. Better the success of perfect intimacy with a few than the flat failure to win the many—as he could only have done by setting the clock of social evolution far ahead, farther than any one man can, even a major prophet. If Meredith had not chosen the fullest possible possession of his own public, he would probably have fallen between two publics, missing both. His actual choice is what he tacitly expresses to us as we see him moving most often in the restricted area of a single ancient house, a single aristocratic family and its connections, choosing a background so remote and personæ so specially bred that our own democratic experience may fail to furnish their counterparts.

These points are worth jotting here, against the popular conception of Meredith as one who framed a cult of exclusiveness for an æsthetic inner circle. He believes in Comedy as democratizer and sweetener of civilization; but finding no audience and, on the necessary democratic scale, no subject, he turns where he can. This resignation he saw as his personal part, the only one possible to him, toward the fulfilment of

his ideal in the future. He is never more truly himself, more Meredithian, than when he says: "I think that all right use of life, and the one secret of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us; as to my works, I know them faulty, think them of worth only when they point and aid to that end."[1]

[1] To G. P. Baker. Pp. 398–99, Vol. 29, *Works of George Meredith*. Memorial Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1909–12.

IV

DIDACTICISM

I

In nearly everything said thus far about the nature of fiction and of the criteria by which we should judge it, it is assumed that all great and good fiction has a purpose, and that that purpose is the impersonal and disinterested expression of imaginative insight into human nature and life. It appeared, or seemed to, that romance and realism are simply different ways of getting at this central thing, and that the differences between them are of means rather than of meaning, of process rather than of purpose. From the perception of this relation, we fell to considering one of the principal obstacles to the impersonal and disinterested expression of truth: the feeling which we call "sentimentalism," an egotistical and interested spirit that will not have truth on truth's own arduous and austere terms, but is always pampering itself with thought of the rewards of truth, or of the superiority conferred by the possession of truth, or of the obnoxiousness of truth which it happens to dislike. Against this enemy of unselfish truth there is, we saw, one spirit which is sure to prevail: the spirit of Chaucer and Rabelais, of Shakspere and Molière, of Jane Austen, of Fielding, of Meredith—the sweetening and chastening influence of Comedy.

We come now to a second and on the whole less formidable enemy of disinterested truth. We as a

generation of readers have come to the conclusion that the novel at its best cannot be primarily a display of the author's personal emotions, the reactions of his own sensibility; and we have as certainly come to the conclusion that neither can it be primarily a display of his private opinions, his ethical sense striking attitudes in the presence of his subject-matter. In short, there has grown up among us a feeling amounting to conviction, and nearly always assumed by critics as a truism, that the novelist must not preach to us. Between the spirit that sentimentalizes and the spirit that preaches, there may be and often is a kinship. Some examples already named in speaking of sentimentalism—*Uncle Tom's Cabin, All Sorts and Conditions of Men,* the juvenile fiction of "Oliver Optic"—are not only sentimental fiction, they are sentimental pulpiteering. They might equally well have been saved for illustration of this second enemy of sound worth in fiction: the pulpiteering spirit, or didacticism.

Our temperamental objection to this particular breach of artistic discipline seems to us deeply grounded, and so much a part of the nature of artistic strategy that we are prone to assume our rightness without argument or investigation. We readily take for granted, unless we have some reading, that the preceptorial tone could never have been a very reputable element in fiction, or have seemed palatable to any great fraction of even the most naïve generation of readers. But does this assumption tally with the fact? *Euphues and His England,* which set a record of

progress in fiction for its own day, is practically a manual of polite usage, a discussion of social and moral codes; the ethical strain is one of the most prominent elements of Sidney's *Arcadia* (his Paméla, by the way, gives all of her name but its accent to Richardson's Pamela); and, as everybody knows, Richardson conceived *Pamela* in the process of creating a sort of manual of letter-writing, a book of models of polite sentimental correspondence for the untutored. From Lyly to the early 19th century in England, and from the middle 17th century to the middle 19th in America, the moral story, or novel written as practical advice and guide to conduct, was exceedingly popular. It is still not a rare genre in Sunday School libraries. The *Aretina* of Sir George Mackenzie, that most exquisite example of the effete "heroic romance," was written on this theory, quoted with intense relish by Sir Walter Raleigh in his admirable little book *The English Novel:* "Albeit Essays be the choicest pearls in the jewel house of Moral Philosophy, yet I ever thought that they were set off to the best advantage, and appeared with the greatest lustre, when they were laced upon a Romance." And the youthful essayist follows his own prescription by interspersing his tale with Euphuistic moralizing essays. Note how matter-of-course is his assumption, the very opposite of ours, that the only tenable purpose of fiction, its one presentable self-justification, is its service as engine of "Moral Philosophy."

There were many decades when all the licentious-

ness in fiction masqueraded as moral instruction by horrible example. The novel could allow itself the most excessive licence in portrayal of vice and scandal, so long as it included the sanctimonious rebuke of evil-doing. The work of Aphra Behn, Mrs. Eliza Haywood, and the once notorious Mrs. Mary de la Rivière Manley survived, at least for a time, the disapproval of good taste largely by virtue of its factitious and hypocritical acceptance of the popular moral judgment. It is sometimes hard for us to remember that the novel as we like it to be has had only a little more than a generation of unchallenged respectability; indeed there are those still living who count it an insidious agency of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Before that very recent attainment of repute, the novel was prone to purchase any cheapest sanction, if only that it might succeed in the struggle to survive at all; and no sanction could be more inexpensive, or more certain to undermine objection on moral grounds, than that of the commonly received theology, the popular ethics. The novelist circumvents the hostility of the pulpit by making his novel a sermon.

The existence of the former prejudice, and the anxiety of even the most innocent teller of tales to protect himself from the suspicion of having taught no moral lesson, may be illustrated by the Preface of *Alonzo and Melissa: or The Unfeeling Father,* an "American tale" signed "Daniel Jackson, Jr.," and published at Exeter in 1831. I quote the whole Preface: if its general quaintness fail to please, none can resist one long and strangely inconclusive sentence

which suggests that even in 1831 the incorrigible typesetter was a sore trial to helpless authorship.—

"Whether the story of Alonzo and Melissa will generally please, the writer knows not; if, however, he is not mistaken, it is not unfriendly to religion and virtue.—One thing was aimed to be shown, that a firm reliance on Providence, however the affections might be at war with its dispensations, is the only source of consolation in the gloomy hours of affliction; and that generally such dependence, though crossed by difficulties and perplexities, will be crowned with victory at last.

"It is also believed that the story contains no indecorous stimulants; nor is it filled with unmeaning and inexplicated incidents sounding upon the sense, but imperceptible to the understanding. When anxieties have been excited by involved and doubtful events, they are afterwards elucidated by the consequences.

"The writer believes that generally he has copied nature. In the ardent prospects raised in youthful bosoms, the almost consummation of their wishes, their sudden and unexpected disappointment, the sorrows of separation, the joyous and unlooked for meeting—in the poignant feelings of Alonzo, when at the grave of Melissa, he poured the feelings of his anguished soul over her niniature [sic] by the 'moon's pale ray;' —when Melissa, sinking on her knees before her father, was received to his bosom as a beloved daughter risen from the dead.

"If these scenes are not imperfectly drawn, they

will not fail to interest the refined sensibilities of the reader."

Nor was it only in the "unofficial sentimentalism," the outlaw fiction of the underworld of letters, that the moral purport of art became a very momentous and pressing problem. Dr. Johnson, of whose official status there could certainly be no question, worried himself, in what seems to us a most naïve and archaic way, over the morality of Shakspere. Shakspere, says Johnson in the introduction to his edition of the plays, "sacrifices virtue to convenience," and is "more careful to please than to instruct." Not only does he make "no just distribution of good or evil," but he is not "always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked." It is quite clear that Dr. Johnson would have considered *Othello* a more moral play if Othello had been made to upbraid Iago in sanctimonious platitudes. When Johnson says that Shakspere "carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong"—that is, tells the truth of life—"and, at the close, dismisses them without further care, and leaves their example to operate by chance," he utters what is from the modern angle the ultimate praise of Shakspere's objectivity, but what is, from his entirely typical 18th century point of view, the gravest censure of a defect which "the barbarity of the age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time and place."

From such representative data it clearly transpires, and is indeed the fact, that throughout most of the

history of modern fiction the novelist's relation to the preacher has been a most real problem, with the tendency all for valuing the story-teller in proportion as he is homilist and sermonizer. Judged as a mere matter of æsthetic taste, our modern predilection may be simply another of the shifting fashions of art, a swing of the pendulum. By the mere counting of heads, either among novelists since Defoe or among their readers, we should undoubtedly find our objection to didacticism overruled; and indeed there is nothing in actual history to tell us that we are right, or that the great novelists of the future may not transmit their meaning or message to us in a gospel of practical conduct, with the strongest emphasis on what we ought to do and why we ought to do it.

II

On the other hand, there is nothing to confine us to the purely historical counting of heads.

Perhaps this is as fitting a context as any for the declaration of a personal faith that the novel as a form and as a possibility, regardless of any individual novelist and his achievement, is always becoming better. It is always learning from itself, its successes and its failures; it is always learning something too, in a less important way, from its critics formal and informal; and as a person is said to "better his condition" by marrying above his class, so the novel is always bettering its condition by marriage with new and important

ideas. We may have no Dickens, no individual creative genius of the first order, but if we did have one he would write better novels than Dickens wrote. It is possible to-day for a very inferior novelist to compose novels better than those of Dickens in every way that acquired knowledge and intelligent workmanship control; indeed it would be difficult for him not to write novels better in such ways than Dickens's. There is an elemental gift of creativeness, and it is more important than anything else; but this is not to say that nothing else is important—and that elemental gift may be hampered and curtailed by temporary conditions of various sorts. The number of such impeding conditions grows, I think, constantly less as the novel learns its lessons of form and taste; genius, supposing it to occur, has more and more certainty of getting itself fulfilled.

So the lesson of history is not just that what has happened may happen again. The very fact that a thing has happened in an organic evolution, like that of a form of art, is almost the strongest guarantee against its happening again; or, if it happen again, against its regaining the elder prestige. How pallid, spurious, and altogether inadequate seems, for example, after even this brief time, the *fin de siècle* attempt by Stevenson and his popular imitators to revive the costume romance of Scott! And if we find history giving a sort of sanction to didactic elements in the novel, such elements as our intuition abhors, we need only reflect that perhaps the change was a real growth; in a word, that our intuition is fundamentally

right, and that the history of fiction in prose is only a series of gropings toward an ideal which is at last found, or approximated. Especially shall we be safe in deploring the didactic fashion if we find our present bias supported by a variety of considerations more fundamental than even the majority vote of history—considerations in reason, in logic, in the whole rationale of taste.

When we approach the question non-historically, we find a decisive argument against the didactic employment of fiction in one simple fact, still too often overlooked: the fact that the novelist creates his evidence, his characters and scenes and situations, his story, and that they are infinitely more his than his opinions are. Nothing about life can be proved by imagined evidence, simply because *anything* about life can be proved by it. It is a truism of logic that nothing can be proved by an analogy, because an analogy can be found in fact that seems to prove any proposition. How much more, then, is the principle true of fiction, which is free to manufacture even its analogy. You can write a story to prove that slavery is an inhuman institution or that it is a humane institution; you can write a novel against monogamy, and another one equally persuasive against polygamy or polyandry or free love. Didactic novels are always concerned to prove something: that one course of conduct is right and the alternative course wrong, that one vice is less vicious than another or one virtue more virtuous than another, that some particular thing ought to be done or not done, that this or that problem

should be solved thus and so, and no otherwise. But the didactic novel is always a self-destroying victim to this betraying fact: that it was created expressly to prove its chosen didactic point, and, being so created, can prove nothing except the existence of its own purpose—that is, its author's private view of something. You cannot get behind or around this fact. It is one of the few non-debatable things—not because, like a matter of taste, it admits of differences outside reason, but because, being purely a matter of reason, it admits of no differences at all. The didactic novelist's imagined evidence is at most simply one vote for one opinion; and on a point open to controversy no opinion is worth anything unless it results from all the votes for that opinion balanced against all the votes for all the other possible opinions.

Even if we were to take the novelist's evidence as unquestioned actual fact instead of fancy, it would fail, then, to do more than illustrate an opinion by a more or less apt analogue. Of the difficulty of cancelling out all the factors in any given human problem of justice so as to get an ultimate and valid solution, John Stuart Mill has this to say:

"To take another example from a subject already once referred to. In a co-operative industrial association, is it just or not that talent or skill should give a title to superior remuneration? On the negative side of the question it is argued, that whoever does the best he can deserves equally well, and ought not in justice to be put in a position of inferiority for no fault of his own; that superior abilities have already advan-

tages more than enough, in the admiration they excite, the personal influence they command, and the internal sources of satisfaction attending them, without adding to these a superior share of the world's goods; and that society is bound in justice rather to make compensation to the less favoured, for this unmerited inequality of advantages, than to aggravate it. On the contrary side it is contended, that society receives more from the more efficient labourer; that, his services being more useful, society owes him a larger return for them; that a greater share of the joint result is actually his work, and not to allow his claim to it is a kind of robbery; that, if he is only to receive as much as others, he can only be justly required to produce as much, and to give a smaller amount of time and exertion, proportioned to his superior efficiency. Who shall decide between these appeals to conflicting principles of justice? Justice has in this case two sides to it, which it is impossible to bring into harmony; and the two disputants have chosen opposite sides: the one looks to what it is just that the individual should receive; the other, to what it is just that the community should give. Each, from his own point of view, is unanswerable; and any choice between them, on grounds of justice, must be perfectly arbitrary. Social utility alone can decide the preference."[1]

When, in ordinary practical living, the sum of wisdom can go no farther than to find what it seems best

[1] From the Essay on Liberty. *Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Government.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. (Everyman's Library.)

to do in the present given conditions, how presumptuous and how hollow it is for the novelist to pretend that he has found a law which is universally true, a precept which will lead no one into error! How vain and, in the last analysis, how silly to expect a fabrication of the inventive faculty to do for all mankind that which the best conscience of the individual man can hardly achieve for that one person, when he has all the terms of his problem spread out tangibly and visibly before him! Looked at in this light, the novel which undertakes to tell us how to live—whom to marry, how to spend our money, how to choose our occupation, what God to believe in—seems at best a poor and shabby pretence, a well-meant insult to the intelligence, as the greater part of human advice in general proverbially is.

III

No: it is not the novelist's province to recommend special points or types of conduct to us, or to instruct us how to take sides in great partisan issues. It is his business to show us what things are and how they work, when looked at in the light of a humanely searching comprehension. The great issues that he tests, he tests in terms of action; for actions, with their results, are his crucible for ideas. He may indeed *treat* certain ideals and notions of obligation in conduct: but only as things that exist, as the forces behind character and action, as things that have, for

his chosen characters in their given set of conditions, certain results. He is not a special pleader for anything.

In these days when novels, as men, are popularly measured by their loyalties and their rancours, most novels written about the international situation take sides heatedly. They are interested in scientific organization when that scientific organization is German, or in heroism when that heroism is French, in the struggle for national solidarity when that struggle is British or American; and especially they are interested in the moral culpability of the enemy. The novelist is not to be despised as a man when he takes sides in such great issues; indeed, we as men should have to despise him if he did not. But as a novelist he has in the long run more to lose by confining himself to one side of a sharp issue than he can possibly gain by it. He may be doing the only thing possible to him in the circumstances; but that only proves that the conscience of life is sometimes a more instant and overmastering thing than the conscience of art, which is patient, far-seeing, and more willing to wait for certified truth than to act on even a noble impulse. The best novels about the great war have been written about its effects on typical individuals or communities, by writers who seem to be saying: "Here is what war is and does in the lives of a certain few persons chosen because they are like thousands of others, only perhaps more interesting." And we know that the great war novels of the future must be about war itself, its heroism and cowardice, its justices and in-

justices, its splendour and its horror. Those great novels will deal with things which are seen of all men as humanly important, wherever and by whomever exhibited, as truly after as before all the present problems are solved and superseded. The only spirit which has any chance of making itself felt in enduring art is that open-minded spirit revealed by an American man of letters, himself one of the most valiant fighters in our Civil War, when, long years after the struggle which had both given and cost him so much, he wrote:

> "I know what uniform I wore—
> O, that I knew which side I fought for!" [1]

When we take this austere view of the artist's detachment from the press of immediate practical issues, on whatever scale propounded, we see not only that it is impossible for his manufactured evidence to prove the rightness of this or that course of conduct, but that if it were possible it would still be undesirable. He has a greater thing to do; and his only hope of being practically useful in the long run lies in his doing it without fear or favour—especially without fear of the consequences if he renounce the popular expediency of the passing moment, and without favour of one character against another because of either's theories of conduct.

Some famous words of Matthew Arnold serve to remind us of what disaster to truth follows the writer's

[1] The Hesitating Veteran in *Shapes of Clay*. By Ambrose Bierce. New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Co. 1910.

dedication of himself to a partisan bias, or to any one of the various self-interests of creed and class. Those words were written, to be sure, to preach a high ideal of criticism; but if they apply to criticism, in one sense a secondary and derived art, how much more emphatically must they apply to literature of the primary and creative orders, in terms of which criticism exists!—

"It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rule for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit to the future, it ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word,—*disinterestedness*. And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from practice: by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches; by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and, by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence

given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it. For what is at present the bane of criticism in this country? It is that practical considerations cling to it and stifle it; it subserves interests not its own; our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them those practical ends are the first thing, and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of those practical ends is all that is wanted. . . . It must needs be that men should act in sects and parties, that each of these sects and parties should have its organ, and should make this organ subserve the interests of its action; but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests, not their enemy, but absolutely and entirely independent of them. No other criticism will ever attain any real authority or make any real way towards its end,—the creating a current of true and fresh ideas.

"It is because criticism has so little kept in the pure intellectual sphere, has so little detached itself from practice, has been so directly polemical and controversial, that it has so ill accomplished, in this country, its best spiritual work; which is to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarizing, to lead him towards perfection, by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things. A polemical practical

criticism makes men blind even to the ideal imperfection of their practice, makes them willingly assert its ideal perfection, in order the better to secure it against attack; and clearly this is narrowing and baneful for them. If they were reassured on the practical side, speculative considerations of ideal perfection they might be brought to entertain, and their spiritual horizon would thus gradually widen. . . .

"It will be said that it is a very subtle and indirect action which I am thus prescribing for criticism, and that, by embracing in this manner the Indian virtue of detachment and abandoning the sphere of practical life, it condemns itself to a slow and obscure work. Slow and obscure it may be, but it is the only proper work of criticism. The mass of mankind will never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas reposes, and must repose, the general practice of the world. That is as much as saying that whoever sets himself to see things as they are will find himself one of a very small circle; but it is only by this small circle resolutely doing its own work that adequate ideas will ever get current at all. The rush and roar of practical life will always have a dizzying and attracting effect upon the most collected spectator, and tend to draw him into its vortex; most of all will this be the case where that life is so powerful as it is in England. But it is only by remaining collected, and refusing to lend himself to the point of view of the practical man, that the critic can do the practical man any service; and it is only by the

greatest sincerity in pursuing his own course, and by at last convincing even the practical man of his sincerity, that he can escape misunderstandings which perpetually threaten him."[1]

Substitute, here, "fiction" and "novelist" for "criticism" and "critic," and "English-speaking countries" for "England," and Arnold serves our purpose not less well than he did his own. The passage cited identifies a partisan criticism, as I wish to identify a partisan fiction, with the sentimental Pharisaism of those who have interests to serve. From our two general objections to the partisan fiction—first, that it is invented expressly to prove something and can therefore prove nothing; second, that the novel has a greater privilege than to prove any controversial point—it will be evident that the preacher in fiction is in an altogether different category from that of the preacher in the pulpit. The point of the difference is not always seen, to be sure: one sometimes hears it urged: "But why should you not listen to the novelist's sermon as well as to the preacher's? Why should you not let the novelist, if he be also a moralist, lay down prescriptions of conduct? Why listen to the ethicist and the priest of religion, and not to him? Is not the counsel of these other two a valuable guide?" To which the answer is, Only if they too be disinterested. The priest does not decide by political interest whom he wishes elected, and then derive his religious principles from his political interest; the sociologist does not divide his world into those whom it would profit

[1] *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time.*

him to put into office and those whom it would profit him to put into jail, and then frame his prescription for society accordingly. At least, if he did we should do very well to distrust him also. Neither properly chooses his evidence to demonstrate a point: the point is considered as existing elsewhere and independently, for the one as part of a law which altereth not, for the other in the nature of society as it is constituted. It is obvious that the partisan novelist cannot be, in this sense, disinterested at all. Whether he chooses the facts and finds a principle to embrace them, or chooses the principle and finds the facts to illustrate it, he is serving an interest other than that with which he has his proper concern—the truth of life, how things are and how they work together for good and for evil.

IV

It is the intention of the argument thus far, not exactly to show that didactic art is bad art, but to show that art is likely to be bad in so far as it is didactic—that is, the didactic element in it is a handicap, one more thing for it to succeed in spite of. Art that is nothing but didactic flatly fails; but in modern conditions it is wholly unlikely that a writing man will turn to the novel if his sole equipment is a set of moral precepts which he holds for ultimate truths. The evangelical novel, despite a few transient vogues such as that of the Reverend Charles M. Sheldon,—*In His Steps* will serve, for those who remember it,

to represent the whole school,—is pretty nearly defunct; and the didactic novel when its propagandizing is secular is always written by an author who has in him something, however obnubilated, of the artist.

That a novel may compete with some success against its own didacticism is shown in the rather illustrious history of protest in the novel. We might go back and retrace this from the indictment of debtors' prisons in *The Vicar of Wakefield;* or we might begin with such protests against institutions as those of Dickens against a certain type of private school in *Nicholas Nickleby* and of Reade against a certain type of private asylum for the insane, and against the laws relating to insanity, in *Hard Cash.* But, for one sufficiently coherent and centralized illustration, we need go no farther than the so-called "novel of protest" of the '50's and '60's.

The novels of this school are the fictional counterpart of the Chartist movement. The protest was against the industrial system of Great Britain—the exploitation of the labouring class, absentee landlordism, child labour, the fearful housing conditions of manufacturing districts, the long hours and unsanitary surroundings of work, merciless competition, and all the political applications of Benthamism and the Utilitarian philosophy as interpreted by those who liked the liberalism of Mill less than his rigour; in short, against the political and economic facts which, helped out by the lean crops of famine years, created all that was most unbearable in the "hungry '40's." Fiction, in its protest against these facts, sounds often

like the sincere but ranting, inflammatory, and headlong utterances of the most modern socialistic demagogue of a violent type.

It is my present point that these novels were saved, not by the remedies proposed or the argument advanced, but solely by the amount of life they objectively depicted and by the open-eyed sympathy which they displayed for it. Disraeli attacked the intolerable conditions in his *Sybil,*—also entitled *The Two Nations,* i. e., the exploiter and the exploited,—and he saw the remedy in the infusion of a new sincerity and courage into the legislative system of England. Kingsley attacked them in *Yeast* and *Alton Locke,* his two burning indictments of the agricultural labourer's life in the country and of the artisan's in the city, and he saw the remedy in that "muscular Christianity" with which his name is commonly joined in some other connections. Mrs. Gaskell attacked them in *Mary Barton,* to my mind by all odds the most powerful book and still one of the most readable books of this whole school and period; and the remedy that she proposed was simply Christian sympathy, exhibited by the employé in forgiving his employer for wrongs done, and by the employer in so far unbending as to see the common humanity in his employé. It is significant that Mrs. Gaskell, when she wrote *North and South* a few years later, saw the burden of guilt as being somewhat differently distributed, and blamed the employé more, the employer less. The remedy was still to understand and forgive, but the need of forgiveness was no longer

confined to one side of the contention. Thus a great authoress, somewhat unfortunately known best by her most flawless novel, *Cranford,* and not by her most striking, saw the impermanence of part of her own didacticism, and made its insufficiency a matter of record.

In all these stories of rebellious protest, the value lies, I say, not in the accusations or the proposed remedies, but in the truthful depiction of what conditions were, and what they did to human men and women and children. The truth revealed and the compassion evoked are enough, in the best of these stories, to carry the burden of theories that pass, solutions that do not solve, and economic doctrines that grow laughably archaic.

And the best of evangelical fiction shows the working of the same law. We value the *Quo Vadis* of the lamented Henry Sienkiewicz, not as a piece of Christian apologetics, not as a sort of sublimated muckraking of paganism, but as a delineation of what Christianity and Christian heroism and martyrdom were, and as an analysis of the chemical reaction that necessarily followed when Christianity and paganism were bottled up together in a part of the world too small to hold both. And if Kingsley's *Hypatia* may be said to live still, it lives only in so far as it did for Alexandria what *Quo Vadis* did for Rome. Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere,* a quasi-didactic anti-evangelical novel, is still impressive, not because it tries to prove that the modern man, if truly courageous and thoughtful, can no longer believe the

literal teachings of the Church, but because it shows, at once intensely and typically, the ferment of some modern doubts in the mind which will have truth at whatever cost. In all stories of which the controversial element is a part, whatever lasting value there is resides in the authenticity of the characters, the importance of the amount and kind of life faithfully portrayed, and the author's success in subordinating his own crotchets and private views to the complex actualities of the struggle which he undertakes to stage. A story is not necessarily bad if it contain a temporal issue didactically resolved and brought to some specious finality. But it is certainly harder for such a story to be good. Didacticism is not the death-warrant of a novel, but it is assuredly not the way of life for it either.

V

On the whole it is safe to say, then, that didacticism is essentially an inartistic spirit. It is among the conceivable possibilities that a novel written primarily for a didactic purpose might turn out to be a good story in all the necessary artistic ways; but the excellence of such a novel would be in the last degree accidental, and it is quite certain that a finely conscientious artist would not project a story in the sermonizing spirit. There are trick pictures which in certain lights reveal hidden faces or, inverted, become other pictures entirely; and it is always possible that one of them might turn out to be a good picture. But a real

painter is concerned with something better than the production of such curiosities. The didactic strain in an otherwise good novel is like the concealed trick of the picture: it is no more important to the goodness of the novel than the Baconian cryptograms, supposing them to exist, are to the goodness of the Shakspere plays. A moral precept hampers the work of fiction; and the question for criticism to ask of the didactic novel is, How much else is there to offset the serious fault? The trouble with the "problem" play or novel, if the problem is really important, is the substitution of a false and arbitrary selective principle for the only valid principle. The material is assembled to prove a contentious opinion, not to represent life by facts chosen for their interest.

Are we then obliged, on these or similar grounds, to deny an allegory, such as *Pilgrim's Progress,* its acknowledged claim to a place among works of art? Indeed no: whether self-evidently or not, this form is an exception to the general indictment. Didactic it is, and partisan, but in a special way, and within a special realm of its own. I can express the matter no more pointedly than by saying that the allegory is nothing *but* didacticism. There is no other purpose than to clothe in striking and ingenious garb the moral precepts in which the allegory has its origin. In other words, an allegory is simply an extended figure of speech, a self-propagating metaphor; and the only artistic questions it raises are, first, whether it is an effective expression of its meaning and, second, whether it has in itself force and beauty. The di-

dactic novel pretends to be doing one thing while really doing something else that is incompatible with the first thing; it makes an interested argument and offers it as a disinterested story. In allegory, the moral argument is the world in which the whole work is conceived, lives, moves, and has its being. It is in essence a set of convictions given shape as dramatis personæ, just as a proper pageant is tradition or geography or history come alive to teach us through the eye and the ear. There is no clash in allegory between a moral purpose and an ostensibly disinterested reading of life, simply because there *is* no ostensibly disinterested reading of life.

Are we then to fall back on art that is "unmoral" —i. e., without any moral signification whatever? Is the rejection of didacticism the acceptance of æstheticism, art for art? By no means. Art can never be "unmoral" so long as either he who makes it or he who enjoys remains a moral being—and whatever art exists for, it is certainly not for itself. We are profoundly and eternally right when we assert that all fiction has some sort of moral basis, sound or unsound, and that, other things being equal, the excellence of the fiction will be in proportion to the soundness of its moral basis. What then do we mean by such statements, and how are they to be reconciled with our objections to the fiction which is preachment?

It is useful at this point to recall our preliminary distinction between the novelist's purpose in writing his book, and the meaning we get out of that book after it is written. The novelist's purpose, I asserted, is

reducible always to a disinterested search for the nature of life, what life is; his meaning, I may now assert, is his character—what *he* is. He may not wilfully intrude himself into the spectacle; but he is there none the less, by the very nature of the relation between the creator and the thing created. He may not have uttered a single sentiment avowedly his own; but he is in the whole composition, the whole composition is in the truest, most inescapable sense *himself*. Certain characters have been shown, certain issues proposed and fought out with some sort of spiritual or material triumph, sympathies have been attracted by some things in the spectacle and repelled by others—and all these matters are the artist's own moral choice, his character objectified. The persons he chooses to depict, the issues that are in his eyes important enough to be struggled over, the kind of triumph won, the direction taken by the reader's sympathy, even the very omissions and suppressions—all these things are the measure of the novelist's will, of the deep unconscious self which he can no more help expressing than the phenomena of nature can help expressing natural law.

It is that deep unconscious self that must, we say, be morally sound. The reader's sympathy must be made to take right directions; the interest must be drawn to things that over-top mere differences of opinion; the set of values implied in the given story must be those to which the moral judgment of mankind instinctively responds. Think what you will about property rights, democracy and autocracy, marriage, slavery, socialism,

revealed religion, you are never in any serious doubt about what is admirable and what detestable in men and women *so long as your self-interest is not touched.* And you say that a novel is morally sound when it makes you feel, without necessarily bothering to think, that the novelist is a person who admires and detests the same fundamental things that everybody else worth hearing admires and detests.

We have heard Dr. Samuel Johnson censure our English Shakspere for his objectivity: Shakspere "carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and, at the close, dismisses them without further care, and leaves their example to operate by chance." But does it operate by chance? Does it not operate about the same way on every one of us? Professor Stuart Sherman, in a recent essay, *The Humanism of Shakspere,*[1] points out that after all no one of us can possibly be in doubt whom of the Shakspere characters we were meant to admire, whom to love, whom to regard indulgently despite their shortcomings, whom to laugh at, whom to loathe. The character may not receive justice on the stage,—in tragedy he seldom does,—but he always receives it in the audience, says Professor Sherman. And that is the only moral effect that counts at all in art. The moral basis of art is the moral consciousness of the race.

"To make the world better" may be, as Johnson says, a writer's duty; but it is hardly a duty that

[1] Reprinted in *Main Tendencies in Contemporary Literature.* By Stuart P. Sherman. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

he can perform the better for being aware of it. He must have his eye outward upon the world; and if he succeed in making the world better, it will be because his eye is such that he cannot help seeing the right things with the right relative values. His purpose must be only the truth. His moral meaning to us will be exactly what *he* is. Whatever a novel is or is not, it is inevitably a close and full revelation of the moral sensibilities of the man who wrote it. It must, whether he will it to or not, express his ethical acceptance of life. In this sense the most "objective" piece of art ever penned on paper, painted on canvas, or carved in stone is as subjective as the most deliberately intimate self-revelation.

V

SATIRE

I

We have now come, I think, to the point where this argument about the purpose and the meaning of fiction begins to have a shape and a recognizable direction. I have proposed, as the purpose and highest general end of fiction, the attainment of disinterestedness or impersonality. Leaving aside for the moment the hundred technical questions of method and design, we begin to see that whatever furthers and enforces this quality is theoretically to be desired, and whatever impedes or befogs it to be deplored. The sentimental spirit and the didactic or preaching spirit, two influences of a close cousinship, fall into their places in the argument as two of the principal forces which defeat impersonality or disinterestedness. The relation between these two is that of a greater and a lesser—or, if we must have a distinction, let didacticism be the cant of the mind, sentimentalism the more fundamental cant of the soul. The two are one at least in the egotism which gives them breath and being; the didactic feeling is sentimental egotism with a specialized twist. We have seen also that Comedy, "the laughter of the mind," is the mortal enemy of sentimentalists in general. Here is the basic conflict, that between impartial and partisan, between disinterested and egotistical. We shall have enlarged the argument and deepened its foundation still further on

this other side, the constructive, as soon as we have seen that, just as didacticism is the sentimental spirit specialized, so Comedy is only a specialized and concentrated mode of the spirit which always opposes the egotism in fiction—the spirit which we may broadly and loosely name Satire.

For the sake, then, of generalizing the historical conflict between two tendencies, I take our two important and familiar words and do some apparent violence to them by giving each the largest, least technical definition possible. Sentimentalism is the spirit that enjoys; in fiction, it is a preponderance of the emotional element. Satire is the spirit that protests; and nearly always so far it has constituted the intellectual element in fiction. The sentimentalist feels more than he thinks; we measure him by his enjoyments. The satirist thinks more than he feels, and we measure him by his aversions. Unreflective sympathy and reflective hatred, these are the two great opposed spirits of fiction, the self-interest and the disinterestedness of the novel as we know it in history.

There can be no great difficulty about the use of our two words in this somewhat lax way: we use words as we will, so long as it is kept before us exactly how we are using them. But there is a seeming paradox in the assertion that the hatred in fiction is more intellectual than the sympathy. Enjoyment is a purely personal predilection, indeed: but is not hate a personal predilection inverted? Is there anything more intellectual in choosing arbitrarily against a thing than in choosing arbitrarily for it? Why

are not both matters of caprice, of temperamental accident merely? In ethics, perhaps they are; not, I think, in literature. Our retort may well be that, in the novel, enjoyment remains as arbitrary as in personal experience, whereas aversion ceases to be purely arbitrary by the very fact of its successful transference to literature. You may love with no argument beyond the wholly personal one of your own quickened intuitions and sympathies. And so, in practical life, you may hate, with no argument except that of the nerves. But put your hatred into a book, and you have to make some show of impersonal justification for it; you have to imply categories, discriminations, and find other than merely personal excuses for them. In short, you have to adduce plenty of sound logical reasons why other persons, your readers among them, should hate as you do. In actual practice, then, hate turns out to be the more impersonal feeling—the more reasoned, the more intellectual, the more disinterested, and by all odds the more social.

Theorizing, it will have appeared, lends some colour of probability to the contrast as I have just stated it. Now, to come from theory to history. It happens that we can observe the workings of these two forces, the self-asserting love and the self-forgetting hate, especially well in English fiction, because in English fiction rather more than elsewhere the novel has achieved greatness rather through splendid particular excesses than through the balance and matching of all qualities. Whenever the novel has not had

the heart-ache of sensibility, it has had the head-ache of ratiocination.

We see the duel between the man of feeling and the man of reflection, not begun, indeed, but momentously represented, in Richardson and Fielding. We can follow it through their descendants to the edge of our own generation. The novel has grown, as Dean Briggs says colts and young boys do, "one end at a time," and its major prophets are those who have obviously thought more than they felt or felt more than they thought. I do not of course mean to blame Richardson and Fielding for all, or most, that clutters our modern field, though they do seem prototypical of a great deal of it. But one must insist on what they broadly represent: the general contest between thinking and feeling, the everlasting tug-of-war between temperaments, which in each generation has pulled at fiction and stretched it more or less out of shape, giving it here a decided bulge toward the emotional, there the opposite bulge toward the intellectual, as sentimentalism or satire has predominated. And it oddly appears everywhere, in confirmation of my present point, that the intellectualist is a person whom we remember by his dislikes, and describe in terms of the things he makes war on. So far in the history of fiction, there is a link between emotionalism and irresponsibility, between intellect and responsibility. The personal aversions are more closely reasoned than the personal predilections. Richardson loved, with all his sensibilities, some things that do not commend

themselves to the intelligence; and Fielding—to put the matter shortly—hated Richardson. The "Gothic" romance loved spookery and neurasthenia for their own sakes; Jane Austen hated those things for the sake of common sense. It would make a long story if one were to recount the hatreds of Dickens—for brutal schools and brutal prisons, for the injustice and incompetence of the law, for the pretentiousness and coxcombry of church and press and forum. We can summarize Dickens in this context by saying that even the characters whom he loves are presented to us in terms of the things they rationally hate, as the elder Weller in terms of his most rational hatred of Stiggins.

If one had, then, to affix a single label to the evolution of fiction in the last hundred and fifty years, that label would be the search for impersonality, for a larger way of looking at things than the way of merely capricious preference. From Lyly to Richardson fiction gropes for realism of method and of detail—for verisimilitude. From Richardson to Thomas Hardy, the period when the novel was attaining its majority as a formal art, it groped for disinterestedness, intellectual strength, a social point of view. Sensibility could not supply these, because it was not critical enough; reasoned antipathies, oftenest sharpened with scorn, supplied or tended to supply them in terms of adverse criticism—or, as I have put it in a roughly summarizing term, Satire.

II

We ought perhaps to retrace enough steps to find the distinction between this general spirit of protest, or Satire, and didacticism. Both of them take a stand, both are designed to instruct; but the stand taken by satire is against rather than for something, and it instructs us in what to avoid, not in what to do. The difference is that between affirmative and negative. What to do can be one of the most difficult of human problems, soluble after all more in terms of motives than in terms of actions themselves—a point which didactic writers nearly always miss. But what to reject, what to loathe—this is oftenest a much easier problem. The socializing influence of hatred is a subject hardly done justice to in the theorizing of moral economists, who will have perhaps somewhat to learn from the vast and terrific exhibitions of that very principle among great modern nations at war.

Most persons, even those of extremely divergent positive tastes, can finding footing of solidarity in endless common aversions. Henry James gave, in *The American*, a sentence of proof how he understood this potentiality in the unlovely side of human nature. Christopher Newman, outraged and humiliated, sees, as he reflects upon the family which has done him a calculated wrong, that their conjoint will to injure was after all, in its way, an aspiration above individual self-seeking: ". . . it was a link for them, perhaps, their having so hurt him."[1] This is not an

[1] *The American*, Chapter XXVI.

achievement of community on the highest possible plane, this solidarity of hatred in a nation, a class, or a family; but it is at least not all evil. We shall find perhaps that neither is the hatred in fiction the ultimate moral achievement; but it is at least a moral achievement, as the merely basking and irresponsible enjoyment quite fails to be. Satire, like didacticism, does then affirm something, but only a negative something—a denial. The novel cannot recommend a cause without preaching; but it can riddle a cause, it can point the scornful finger, without so prejudicially committing itself.

I have said that satire is clearly negative instead of affirmative; but this does not mean that it is necessarily destructive instead of constructive. It is an axiom of literature, whatever may be said of politics and religion, that some sort of destruction is often the only possible kind of construction. Satire has at different times—notably in verse of the second third of the 18th century—fallen to the low estate of a convention; the accent of Juvenal has become the accent of fashion. But at its best satire is the gesture of idealism and of righteous human indignation in the presence of abuses not to be borne; the natural response of the moral sense to the various affronts by injustice and corruption in a world out of joint, or seen by the satirist as being out of joint. When there is so much for ordinary decency to loathe, how idle to give one's self up to tender dreaming! this is the mood underlying really noble satire. The method may be destructive, but the spirit is something more.

The best satire of Swift, of Goldsmith, of Dickens, even of Smollett—is it not at once both humanistic and humanitarian in its effect? To denounce a wrong is to enforce some alternative right; when the heart is made to burn most hotly against obvious injustices, then it is nearest to melting in that pity and fear which, according to Aristotle, are the purifying emotions of tragedy. And even when the satire is cold, as it commonly is when given the inflection known as irony, it still makes us hate in a greater cause than self-interest, and encourages us to want noble things while resenting ignoble ones. Any one can verify for himself this constructive and humanizing power of rightly directed aversion, by considering for a moment Fielding's picture of hypocrisy in Blifil, George Eliot's of weak infidelity in Tito Melema, Hardy's of narrow self-righteous goodness in Angel Clare, or any of a hundred other portraits of characters whom we were meant to admire as inventions but to detest as personal embodiments of certain traits.

Satire makes hatred impressive and valid, in short, whenever it makes it most nearly universal. If it be asked whether the satirist is not in some danger of tumbling into the pitfall of sentimentalism and of missing a just breadth of appeal by stressing aversions not belonging to our common human idealism, we may indeed concede the point. And for illustration of it we have to look no farther than to Swift as he wrote in the hours when, carried along on the force of his own invective and lashing himself into a misanthropic fury, he ceased to make the good hate the evil in man

and portrayed all humankind as evil utterly. In the last book of *Gulliver's Travels,* where man is exclusively a Yahoo and all his character is in "the teeth and the claws," pity recoils upon the author himself, and fear shrivels us more than it purifies. Satire is purging only when it points to aversions which we can all be made to share; when it denounces inhumanity for the sake of humanity. It is beside the point to denounce humanity, for to do that is to reject everything. Satire must keep its categories and discriminations; and they must be founded on principles which go deeper than argument, principles which we are bound to hold to by virtue of our existence as social human beings of a common origin, common interests, and a common destiny.

III

This paradox, the constructive potentiality of a method purely negative, appears in the most elaborate examples of satire of the type *voyage imaginaire,* all the way from *The Ultimate Things Beyond Thule* by Antonius Diogenes [?] to M. Anatole France's *L'Ile des Pingouins,* and, in classic English, from Defoe's *Memoirs of Sundry Transactions in the World of the Moon* and Swift's *Gulliver* to the late Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* and *Erewhon Revisited.* All of these are the Utopian romance more or less inverted. I pass over this form, with but this incidental note, in order to come to a still more refined and specialized application of satire which has rather more to do with the

realistic novel; a genre of satire reduced to a formal, calculated, and sustained system of irony, of which we have two illustrious examples in English, separated by almost exactly a century: Fielding's *Jonathan Wild the Great* and Thackeray's *Barry Lyndon,* the second of these in definite and unmistakable imitation of the first.

These are the old picaresque novel in an elaborate mask. Their subject matter is unscrupulous but picturesque roguery; their method is to hold that roguery up to mock admiration, very much as Swift, in such essays as *A Modest Proposal,* affects a mock admiration for the ruthless inhumanity of oppressors of the poor. Jonathan Wild is a personage of undeviating criminality; the beautiful consistency of his life is marred by scarce a single generous deed or decent impulse. From the time of his youthful captaincy over a gang of orchard robbers, when he was invariably "treasurer of the booty, some little part of which he would now and then, with wonderful generosity, bestow on those who took it," until his consummation on the scaffold or "tree of glory," when he found breath to deliver "a hearty curse" upon the assembled crowd, he showed himself to be "not restrained by any of those weaknesses which disappoint the views of mean and vulgar souls, and which are comprehended in one general term of honesty, which is a corruption of HONOSTY, a word derived from what the Greeks call an ass." From the title-page to the closing sentence there is an incessant harping on the word "greatness," used in this scheme of irony

to mean material success without moral goodness. And when, near the end, Fielding reduces the career of his infamous protagonist to a list of elementary principles of "greatness," behold! that list exactly defines and delineates the practices by which Fielding saw eminence achieved in the most respected careers of his own 18th century world. His purpose is to show how a boot-licking society worshipped prestige no matter how gained; his method is to draw a grotesque parallel between the successful man of the great world and the successful criminal of the underworld, and to signify that the one is as little worthy of admiration as the other. This catalogue of principles, as applicable to a Robert Walpole as to a Jonathan Wild, seems to me to be among the most ingenious and pointed uses of savage irony in English:

"1. Never to do more mischief to another than was necessary to the effecting of his purpose; for that mischief was too precious a thing to be thrown away.
"2. To know no distinction of men from affection; but to sacrifice all with equal readiness to his interest.
"3. Never to communicate more of an affair than was necessary to the person who was to execute it.
"4. Not to trust him who hath deceived you, nor who knows he hath been deceived by you.
"5. To forgive no enemy; but to be cautious and often dilatory in revenge.
"6. To shun poverty and distress, but to ally himself as close as possible to power and riches.
"7. To maintain a constant gravity in his countenance and behaviour, and to affect wisdom on all occasions.
"8. To foment eternal jealousies in his gang, one of another.

"9. Never to reward any one equal to his merit; but always to insinuate that the reward was above it.
"10. That all men were knaves or fools, and much the greater number a composition of both.
"11. That a good name, like money, must be parted with, or at least greatly risked, in order to bring the owner any advantage.
"12. That virtues, like precious stones, were easily counterfeited; that the counterfeits in both cases adorned the wearer equally, and that very few had knowledge or discernment sufficient to distinguish the counterfeit jewel from the real.
"13. That many men were undone by not going deep enough in roguery; as in gaming any man may be a loser who doth not play the whole game.
"14. That men proclaim their own virtues, as shopkeepers expose their goods, in order to profit by them.
"15. That the heart was the proper seat of hatred, and the countenance of affection and friendship." [1]

This extraordinary satire of Fielding, and Thackeray's more sprightly imitation of it, serve well enough to introduce us to one of the great questions of artistic economy in the novel: To what extent is it expedient, and to what extent right, for fiction to specialize in the vicious, the criminal, the decadent, the morbid? Is it good taste, and is it ethical, for art to deal extensively with what is inherently forbidding or repulsive? Of course these two pieces of irony do not actually help us answer the question, because they mean the opposite of what they say; but they do interestingly suggest the question. And we have to face that question squarely in such stories as deal literally with evil character and action.

[1] *Jonathan Wild the Great*, Book IV, Chapter XII.

Theoretically and *a priori,* we should have to say that art ought to encourage and inspirit us, not depress. But instantly there arises another question: May not it truly hearten and inspirit us, by indirection, through display of things to be shunned, and through the moral recoil provoked by such display? And there is obviously something to be said in the affirmative. Mr. Chesterton, speaking particularly of Fielding and *Tom Jones,* says: "We have grown to associate morality in a book with a kind of optimism and prettiness; according to us, a moral book is a book about moral people. But the old idea was almost exactly the opposite; a moral book was a book about immoral people. A moral book was full of pictures like Hogarth's *Gin Lane* or *Stages of Cruelty,* or it recorded, like the popular broadsheet, *God's Dreadful Judgment* against some blasphemer or murderer. . . . Telling the truth about the terrible struggle of the human soul is surely a very elementary part of the ethics of honesty. If the characters are not wicked, the book is."[1]

As a matter of fact, though, it is not very helpful to try to answer such questions theoretically and *a priori.* They have to be answered historically, with reference to that which has proved itself excellent. And we find, whether we begin with Euripides or with Chaucer or with Shakspere or with Fielding, that no very enduring writer has tried to shirk the problem of evil. Some of the characters who are

[1] *All Things Considered.* By G. K. Chesterton. New York: John Lane Co. MCMIX. Pp. 264–66.

greatest as creations are least great as moral beings; some of the books which most develop and crystallize our moral ideas do so through the presentation of guilt. To summarize, still measuring by this same very handy yardstick of what has proved itself of enduring merit, we can make out at least these few tenable principles:

First, the artist's business is with the whole of life; and there is no department or phase of it into which he may not go, granted only enough conscience and enough skill.

Secondly, he must have that conscience and that skill: we must feel the soundness of his purpose, and there must be no blurring of moral values, no false glamour to make us forget that we are supposed to be reading a criticism of life performed under certain standards. Evil when shown in books can serve no self-justifying purpose unless it is known as evil. We see an infringement of this law in a modern fashion of sentimentalizing crime and criminals, and in a current fashion of looking so indulgently upon the tawdry philanderings of sexually irresponsible persons as to carry indulgence over into a sort of perverted evangelism of the fleshly lusts.

Thirdly, if the artist lack critical sense, if he tacitly accept evil as normal, or as indistinguishable from good, he is convicted by his own handiwork; he has palpably made the worse appear the better reason—in which event he pays, as history abundantly proves, the penalty of a speedy oblivion. The dogma of "Art for Art's sake" is eminently productive of this danger

—Art being unintelligible except as a ministration to the highest pleasures of man, and the pleasures of the gratified moral sense being surely among those highest.

All of life, then, is open to the artist; and we may say that the quintessence of art is some sort of struggle, on a higher or lower plane, between something which ought to enlist the moral sympathies of the reader and something else which ought to repel them. But the artist is responsible for the meaning of that struggle and for the plane on which it takes place; and if the meaning be perverted or the plane a low one, there is no excusing the artist on the ground of his invisible good intention or his honest error or incapacity.

IV

It was through the study of evil in character that satire achieved the most important development of its whole history on the non-technical side—a development which involved something amounting to the destruction of satire as such, and the transmutation of it into something still more disinterested and impersonal. I can state this development succinctly by saying that, before the 19th century was far advanced, the villain passed out of literature.

The passing of the villain is one of the most interesting phases of literary history since Jane Austen. With the assimilation of the romantic blend of humanitarianism and individualism, the villain found

two possible destinies awaiting him. He could become the Byronic hero, a superman full of sin and *Weltschmerz* and glamour, a dark fallen angel, an attitudinizing rebel hero; or he could become a human being just a little on the lower side of the median of average human goodness—the victim of accidents in heredity or circumstance, a weaker brother but not a compendium of all possible malice and unscrupulousness. Where the romantic individualism triumphed, as in the earlier Bulwer-Lytton, the villain became the Byronic hero; where the romantic humanitarianism triumphed, as in Dickens, the villain became a human being—with a sentimental proclivity, it must be added, for becoming in the last chapter an unnaturally good one. This epoch, the late Romantic and early Victorian, is the epoch of the desperate criminal presented as a creature of good impulses misdirected, an ogre who might as easily have been an angel if he had had better luck with his parents and his education. The Byronic superman we may profitably discard: his existence in letters becomes more and more precarious, until he passes into juvenile fiction and melodrama—for example, the astonishingly ornate and intricate melodrama of Wilkie Collins.

But the other type of converted villain, the type which evolves toward average manhood, and not toward the fallen angels, is of genuine importance. Sentimentalized as was the treatment of him before 1845, illogical and shallow as was the sympathy lavished upon him in some quarters, notably in parts of Dickens, the human villain was to live on and wax

great, not only overcoming the propensity of his creators to weep and sigh over him, but actually overcoming in the end the whole practice of satire as an unequivocal issue between black and white, evil and good. The villain was originated in sentimentalism, but he was continued in the scientific spirit. When it was once seen that any really interesting villain was made up of a great deal of humanity plus a certain admixture of evil inclination, it was sure to be seen next that any really interesting person was a quite similar compound. In other words, as soon as the humanitarian feeling and the sense of brotherhood became assimilated and rationalized, the struggle of fiction became transferred from the stage where hero contends against villain to the other stage where he contends against the unheroic in himself. The issue is just as sharp, just as definitive; the direction of our moral aversion is no more ambiguous than before; but its object is now only part of a character, the weakness or failing of an individual with whom on the whole we identify ourselves in sympathy. Mankind is no longer classifiable into devils to hate and angels to love:

> "Some are fine fellows, some right scurvy;
> Most, a dash between the two"—

and the task of the novelist and his reader is neither to hate nor to love, but to understand.

Fielding, of course, showed a considerable mastery of this mingled affair, human nature, but came too early to discard the machinery of the superficial vil-

lain. He gives us, roughly, a heroine who is perfect angel, a villain who is perfect devil except that he is not a gentleman, and a hero who is indeed "a dash between the two," a creature near to the human average. Jane Austen, whose genius is throughout one of rare and almost miraculous anticipations, is most of all in advance of the novel of her day in this respect, the complete human credibility of practically all her puppets. Historically, the full fruition of the modern scientific and impersonal interest in evil occurs in George Eliot. The first of great English novelists to come to her proper work from philosophy and the abstract sciences, she is before all else the analyst of that sin which is omission, and the cause of which is weakness. She studies, in one crucial instance after another, the balance of power between opposed forces in the single character; and she never makes the mistake of alienating her character from our sympathy by creating him a prodigy of either moral extreme. Even when we study her weaklings, such as Tito Melema and Geoffrey Cass, aversion is mollified by understanding; and in her more balanced characters, such as Maggie Tulliver and Romola—they are most often women—the presence of tragic limitations is precisely what wrings out the last drop of our sympathy. If we hated the weakness more we should understand it less; and if the human imperfections were absent the struggle would lose all its moral poignancy. In George Eliot's work we see satire beginning to turn into something else.

V

This symptom, the dissolution of the personal villain and his re-emergence as the seed of evil or of weakness in average human nature, points, then, to the development which superseded satire. Sentimentalism came first, with its intuitional and unreflective enjoyment; its limitation was that it got itself valued by the intensity of the enjoyment and not by the inherent worth of the things to be enjoyed. Satire followed; a reaction against sentimentalism, and an application of the theory that you could save yourself by hating hateful things. Satire is at least, for this reason, more disinterested than sentimentalism. But the time came, with the decay of dogmatic theology and the less authoritative, more experimental interpretation of moral law, when hatred was seen to be anachronistic and not enough. It was better, of course, to hate the right things responsibly than to love the wrong things, or even the right ones, irresponsibly; but the sincere part of the Victorian humanitarian feeling had somewhat changed the emphasis of human affections generally. It will be fairly accurate to say that after a certain point the 19th century was moved to see how many things it could love humanity in spite of; that is, how much it could understandingly forgive. And its forgiveness was based, not as of old on sensibility, on emotional charity, but on the analytical charity of comprehension. The world of fiction had a sudden vision of how much alike, ultimately, we all are.

The patient anatomizing which George Eliot performed upon the conscience and the feeling of personal guilt was, as I suggested, the purely rational fruit of this new feeling. On the purely temperamental side, we find its fruit in Thackeray and in Anthony Trollope, taking there the shape of their rare and unprecedented tolerance for their characters. This indulgent and benignant irony of the creator toward his creatures is a new strain in the novel. Jane Austen, serene in spirit as she was, quietly modulated as was her criticism, would have no nonsense from her personæ; let Miss Bennet in her prejudice, or Darcy in his unregenerate pride, betray an insincerity, and she is always ready with a tart little rebuke. She will love them so long as they are honestly wrong; but let them be guilty of posturing or deceiving themselves, and she wastes no sympathy on them. Thackeray and Trollope perform the miracle, almost lost since Shakspere, of keeping their characters vivid and whole in two quite separate provinces: one of moral common sense, where we know their vices exactly and will tolerate no illusions about their worth, and another of pure artistic appreciation, where they perpetually divert us by being themselves. Thackeray sustains his and our admiration for such designing adventuresses as Becky Sharp and Blanche Amory, without ever pretending that they are better than they are; he has at once the personal enjoyment of their rarity, and the impersonal estimate of their moral deficiencies. And one wonders whether Trollope could ever possibly have given any

reader the joy in Mrs. Proudie that he found in her himself. She richly merited death; there are many chapters which make the reader want to lay violent hands on her; yet Trollope long plotted in vain to kill her, and when, under the spur of a conversation about her overheard in a library, he nerved himself to the deed and went home and committed it, he felt as though he had actually done murder. This was not in the least because he was addicted to inventing sentimental extenuations of Mrs. Proudie's general hatefulness and hypocrisy: it was because he had known her long and intimately enough to see that she could no more help being what she was than Mr. Harding could help being what *he* was. This tolerance, of the intellect alone in some modern persons, of the temperament alone in others, is perhaps the ultimate human wisdom. At all events, in literature it is the end of satire as a formula of methodical scorn or ridicule.

Since Trollope the indulgent view of human nature has had its way more and more. The passing of dogmatic theology weakens the feeling of a hard-and-fast moral law, before which all men are classifiable as saints or sinners; the rapid rise and triumph of the cosmic sciences make an organic unit of the world with all its living creatures, intensifying the perception that all are knit together by a common origin and a common destiny; the social sciences have their birth in this feeling; and it becomes an impossible anachronism to hate again in the old unequivocating way. One must either renounce the violent antipa-

thies altogether and replace them by a universal tolerance, or else one must find something larger to hate.

Not unnaturally, both possibilities come to pass in a single generation. Zola in France and Gissing in England turned the novel into a sort of laboratory experiment, impersonally conducted and carefully measured; man is analysed in certain of his crucial relations to his fellowmen. At the same time, Samuel Butler was declaiming against man's slavery to his heritage from past generations, hating thus a part of the general constitution of the world. And before long Hardy was to personify all the injustice in the world as a malignant God, and set up that God as the object of man's puny and ineffectual curses. This is as far as satire can go toward the impersonal and still be satire. When hatred has turned from actual men and women and their actions in order to expend itself on an evil principle, it is hatred quite depersonalized. Since 1895 and *Jude the Obscure,* there is in fact hardly a good hater left in British fiction.

VI

THE REALISTIC SPIRIT

I

In describing the history of English fiction since 1740 as a war between sentimentalism and satire, which I roughly identified respectively with the emotional and the intellectual elements in fiction, I had in mind a certain great change which has but lately come over the spirit of the novel; a change which amounts to nothing less than a pact of peace after this long feud, and which is so important that it seems to promise sweeping changes in the novel of the future, a quite different direction and set of intellectual ideals. I have already mentioned several middle and late Victorian symptoms of the struggle of the modern novel toward intellectual disinterestedness: such symptoms as Thackeray's indulgence toward the foibles of his personæ, George Eliot's philosophical interest in the nature and significance of evil, Samuel Butler's analysis of heredity, Hardy's indictment of the whole world-purpose as a cruel irresponsibleness, and Gissing's researches in sociology; to which we may add, of course, Meredith's re-creation of Comedy as "the laughter of the mind." All these point to the one fact: the passing of the old violent and arbitrary antipathies. Hatred becomes an anachronism and contempt an impertinence. A broader interpretation of what the world-organism is, and of how cause interlocks with effect, helps the novelist see that all of

us equally are what we were made, what we cannot help being; and more and more the ideal goal of fiction becomes this elemental truth of cause and effect, the truth of what life and character are without reference to what the novelist personally would like them to be. The old intellectualism of satire was a criticism of life in the adverse sense of being a denunciation of what it ought not to be. The new intellectualism is a criticism of life in the sense of being simply an interpretation of what life is, beyond our power to help or prevent. The temperamental indulgence of Thackeray becomes the philosophical tolerance, the rooted conviction, of the present age; the spirit of satire becomes what I shall call, to distinguish it from the realistic technique or method, the new Realistic Spirit.

I have said that this recent triumph of the realistic spirit, the triumph of intellectualism in the novel, marks the end of the old war of satirist and sentimentalist; and indeed that is a fact which we need to perceive if we are to understand what the fiction of the present is about, and what the fiction of the future is most likely to be about. Sentimentalism was sympathy, capriciously and arbitrarily exerted: the realistic spirit is universal sympathy, an attempt to understand everything from its own point of view. Satire was a half-impersonal attempt to define something that everybody ought to hate: the realistic spirit is a much more impersonal attempt to show that there is nothing human which a really enlightened mind ought to hate. The old novel was intellectual about in proportion as it was polemical: it thought and fought,

or it felt and waxed irresponsible. The new spirit makes it at once less polemical and more intellectual. The new sympathy is more analytical than the old satire—besides being far more inclusive than the old sympathy. The realist—I speak of him still as the child of his time, the present, peering as far as I can through the dust raised by lesser conflicts of fashions and personalities—the realist is the legitimate child of satirist and sentimentalist. He thinks with his sensibilities, feels with his intellect; criticism and enjoyment fuse. Sentimentalism dealt with the egocentric life, the emotional seemings of things to susceptible folk; satire dealt with the ethical life, the possibilities of things. Our realist records the possibilities and the seemings, but not to identify himself with either; for he sees them as incidental to the more probing queston of what life inscrutably *is*.

We may leave aside for the moment the question of whether this sweeping change in fiction is a change for the better, a growth. I think we can see pretty readily that it is inevitable, and that its inevitability lifts it above the rank of the mere fashions, the flux and reflux, that in every age exert a transient effect on the shape and composition of the novel. I can best state the importance of this change if I say that it is the response of the novel to the corresponding change which has come over everything else. Any one who will take the trouble to read the polemical and controversial writings of such a man as Huxley will see how man's conception of the world changed its center of gravity in the thirty-five years after the

publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species.* The world as an organization, a product of will, became the world as an organism, the product of natural law; the province of faith appeared to shrink and that of sight to expand; the higher criticism had its way, first with Moses, then with the four gospels; and before 1890, before the end of Huxley's long controversy with Gladstone over *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture,* it was possible for Mrs. Humphry Ward, whom it is moderately difficult to think of as a violent iconoclast, to write an important novel, *Robert Elsmere,* about the difficulty which any modern man of both intelligence and courage must experience in believing the dogmas of Christian theology. For good or evil, the world had to consider its own meaning and interpret its own natural history more broadly, less arbitrarily. The natural outcome of this new vision of man in relation to all things was the rise of the social sciences; the perception that social problems are often perhaps insoluble, that at any rate there is no panacea. And fiction, partly anticipating and partly following the tendency visible everywhere else, acquired this open-mindedness, became impersonal and disinterested to the last degree.

Both sentimentalism and satire are very comfortable postures in an orthodox universe, governed by divine law and dedicated to some ultimate enforcement of order. The sentimentalist feels that everything is already settled without his connivance, and that he may as well enjoy what appeals to him; the satirist thinks he knows just *how* everything is settled, and, under-

standing the law, can do no less than lay it down. But either attitude seems childish when the decay of faith turns the universe into an overwhelming riddle, its truths into antiquated speculations, its fixed moral laws into mere truisms about animal behaviour. The mature man then is he who senses the relative, provisional, and impermanent status of all that is thought or known—the man without prejudices. Our realist escapes all prejudices by respecting all opinions, and rejecting all. He has the open inquiring mind, the steeled heart. He believes in everything as an evidence, but in nothing as a proof. His mind is a sympathetic and submissive recording instrument for the actual; for every experience, thought, memory, impression, or dream. He sympathizes with all, because his philosophical conscience tells him that whatever exists is worthy of sympathetic understanding. In short, his unremitting effort is to get outside himself, his own likes and dislikes, and finally to get outside the world, outside everything. For it is only from that impersonal point of vantage, he tells himself, that it is possible to see *through* everything. Likes and dislikes become relatively meaningless in a world conceived as an evolutionary unit, in which we are all necessarily parts of each other.

II

This new mood that has come over the practice of fiction can be summarized as a selfless and pervasive

curiosity. The old hatreds have passed, irrecoverably, it would seem. Even so vigorous a fighting man as Huxley, defending himself from the charge of having gone out of his way to assail things commonly held sacred, says: "I . . . steadfastly deny that 'hatred of Christianity' is a feeling with which I have any acquaintance. There are very few things which I find it permissible to hate; and though, it may be, that some of the organizations, which arrogate to themselves the Christian name, have richly earned a place in the category of hateful things, that ought to have nothing to do with one's estimation of the religion, which they have perverted and disfigured out of all likeness to the original."[1] Thus, in the chief controversialist of his age, a scientific impartiality takes the place of bias; and presently that mood of the laboratory, the mood of research, has conquered the novel and annexed it as an invaluable province.

When we look for illustrations through fiction of the last twenty years, we do not have to go unrewarded. If we examine the only literary career since George Eliot's that can compare in length, in dignity, and in originality with the careers of Hardy and Meredith,—that of Henry James,—we shall find it animated from the earliest years by this very impulse of curiosity. Henry James won his first distinction as a student of international situations, with special reference to the American abroad; and of all the writers in his generation who dealt with such themes, he alone

[1] *Science and Christian Tradition*, p. vii. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1894.

portrayed Americans and Europeans who were wise enough to learn much from each other, too wise to try to teach each other anything. He creates the best elements discoverable in modern characters who are products of quite separate places and traditions of breeding, and then simply throws those contrasting elements together in crucial situations to see what will happen. He takes his spoil, his trophy, and gives us our reward, not in the triumph of one set of characters or interests over another, but simply in the triumph of understanding all round. And, late in his life when his work of fiction was almost over and he sat down to make the Prefaces to the definitive New York edition of it,—a series of the most valuable documents ever produced in constructive criticism of fiction as an art,—his constant emphasis was upon the unflagging ingenuity and patience with which he had drawn his clues from life and extricated them from the mass of interfering attendant circumstances. The exertion of selfless curiosity is to him a good in itself; curiosity is the only one of his emotions to which the baffling element in life makes any challenge worth accepting; a problematical character or situation is an importunate plea addressed to his intuition; and in him this essentially modern disinterested emotion of curiosity enlarges its scope until it includes compassion, chivalry, self-renunciation, the uttermost extension of delicacy, and what Professor Wendell has called, in a fine commemorative tribute, his "exquisite solicitude." Henry James made of curiosity nothing less than a whole philosophy of art

and life. The emotion extends its scope from *Roderick Hudson* and *The American,* books of his first fame, to *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl,* his crowning attempts to tell "the story that cannot be told." And *The Sacred Fount,* the one novel into which he deliberately put a partial portrait of himself, is nothing more than a dramatization of enlightened curiosity, of a sort of sublimated appetite for benevolent gossip, at work in a tangled social situation where all the clues are not material but spiritual and intuitional.

This spirit of curiosity, as exhibited quintessentially in the novels and tales of Henry James, strangely fulfils the commandment to love one's neighbour as one's self; the realist's effort is precisely to get outside himself and inside his neighbour, to see others as they see themselves. This self-suppression is conceived, not as a moral duty, but as an intellectual privilege; but the result is largely the same. Why blame things for being what they are, when everything is what it cannot help being? "To understand is to forgive." Mr. John Galsworthy expresses the modern spirit, in one of his brave if slightly discouraged sketches, *The Inn of Tranquillity,*[1] when he says that it is wrong for one of us to despise another, because "we are all little bits of continuity." "To despise one another is to deny continuity; and to deny continuity is to deny eternity." Each of us is only a drop in the same ocean of being. And Mr. Joseph Conrad, who is

[1] *The Inn of Tranquillity.* By John Galsworthy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

hardly less illuminating in discussion of his art than in the practice of it, says in a memorable passage: ". . . the unwearied self-forgetful attention to every phase of the living universe reflected in our consciousness may be our appointed task on this earth."[1] "The detached curiosity of a subtle mind" is the faculty which he dramatizes in *Chance*—in fact, in all the stories related by Marlow—and his whole philosophy is implied in the statement that "Resignation, not mystic, not detached, but resignation open-eyed, conscious, and informed by love, is the only one of our feelings for which it is impossible to become a sham."

It would be easy to find plenty of other testimony to this same effect, but none more authoritative than that of these three artists who happen also to be critics of their art. Impersonal curiosity, in that ultimate development where it becomes almost a synonym of Christian charity, has entered the novel to the exclusion of the old prides, prejudices, and hates; and it is impossible for us to imagine what can ever drive it out again. Science has created a new world and destroyed the old world behind us; we cannot, if we would, retreat into that old world of fixed standards where we were commanded to love some things and hate others. Our generation has seen the literature of sentimentalism become more "unofficial" than ever, and sink its appeal to the lowest intelligences. Meanwhile, the literature of satire has descended to mere muck-raking. The falling to pieces of these tradi-

[1] *A Personal Record*, p. 151. New York: Harper & Bros. MCMXII.

tional extremes and the emergence between them of the present official literature of curiosity, of investigation under the realistic spirit, constitute the final evidence of the change that has come over things, and of its general irrevocableness.

III

So far I find myself sufficiently occupied with merely describing and reporting the tendency which I have called by this name of the realistic spirit. But to describe is not necessarily to approve; nor do I mean to let the discussion become wholly uncritical. The realistic tendency may be inevitable, yet at the same time deplorable; and if we, necessarily the children of our time, see inherent weaknesses and shortcomings in the mood that rules us, we must not be afraid to state them squarely, and to ask, in a spirit of fearless comparison, where that mood is likely to bring us out.

Any one can see, I think, that the realistic spirit is not without its defects and dangers, and that the first among these is the danger of losing the sense of criticism of life. That fiction, to deserve its place, must be in some sense a critical test of values in reality, in character and in conduct, I must hold as a first postulate. Fiction is criticism when it takes sides, as satire does; fiction is criticism when it fearlessly and impartially investigates the nature of life and society, as modern realism does. But the spirit which makes

everything in the world seem worth investigation, this indefatigable modern curiosity, may result in the substitution of a lesser faculty for interpretative criticism—the lesser faculty, I mean, which contents itself with reporting the existence and the unnumbered aspects of reality, quite forgetting the while that the tremendous question is what we *want*, what we need. The patient scrutiny of everything in the field of vision may result at length in a curious optical defect; not exactly a blurring of the sight, for our realist is nearly always a clear-eyed person, but a loss of proportion and perspective. In short, he who is interested in everything and intolerant of nothing tends to become *equally* interested in everything; to make actuality, and not worth, his test of values. Some of us, if we read critically, think we have lately seen the love of reality for its own sake pushed to that excess where it defeats the meaning of reality. One can see a crowd only by being out of it; and one can evaluate the masses of facts in a novel only when one knows through what philosophical window one is looking at them. The "documenting," note-taking, data-gathering novelist who says to us simply: "These things are so, my word for it: make what you choose of them," is giving us no philosophical window through which to see his crowd; and if our critical sense is numbed and the spectacle becomes for us a meaningless pageant of the real, that outcome is hardly to be wondered at.

This loss of criticism is the destiny which has obviously overtaken some of the current reputations de-

rived simply from an enormous industry in observing, an enormous skill in reporting. And I see a consequence of this loss, a consequence as natural as it is lamentable, in the relative disappearance from fiction of great and likable characters, and the substitution of weak, unreal, and tawdry characters. Editors of literary columns have developed a habit of reminding us that British fiction for several decades past has created only three or four characters who are welcomed into the common stock available for popular allusion—say, Hardy's Tess, Kipling's Mulvaney, and Sherlock Holmes. I am far from sure that this is an intelligent selection, depending as it does on the mere counting of heads over a very short period of time; but the prevalence of the elegiac tone in present editorial comments on the characters of fiction is at least evidence that the novel has lost some power in what ought to be its chief province. There is no predicting an illustrious or even a safe future for the novel if it is losing the art of criticism through the positive and unmistakable bestness of its personæ.

I am not forgetting that I previously claimed for the novelist his privilege of treating human weakness and degeneration; but to yield any palpable reward the weakness he treats should be the weakness of the strong, and the character who degenerates should not be a degenerate character. Let us by all odds have intellectual analysis; but first of all let us have something worth analysing. Too often of late fiction has lost its sense of differences, and has

not only treated persons who are infirm, morbid, or vicious, but has treated them *as though* they were admirable and lovable. The novelist has become so obsessed by the vision of our common humanity that he has lost sight of all those differences and superiorities which alone make humanity deserve consideration in art. The biologist in the laboratory may get as much out of a polyp as out of a monkey; but the novelist cannot get as much out of a monkey as out of a man. The difference is that the scientist is working, in each experiment, for all time, adding grain of sand to grain of sand in his task of building out the shore of knowledge into the sea of ignorance; whereas the novelist is working in terms of books which are themselves complete wholes, and must separately stand or be swept away. The ideal of research, without reward in the present, is not for him; every time he signs his name he must have given us something positive, or we find no meaning in his work. Let him recognize the temporary and limited conditions of his craft, and remember that fiction, under whatever philosophy or lack of philosophy, is truly constructive only so long as it criticizes life through great persons, ideals made flesh. We have seen, I think, that the realistic equanimity is on the whole less likely to create great characters than was the older philosophy which found room for intense predilections and fierce aversions.

IV

The only intelligible reason for criticism is to get things improved or somehow changed; and behind my

general assumption that literature is criticism of life is an implication that literature has something to do with making life better. I raised a moment ago, and now raise again, the question of what we modern people want. I suppose that, *being* modern people, we want, as Mr. Galsworthy does, more of the feeling of continuity—the sense of universal human kinship as we look upon our fellow men and their affairs, the sense of cosmic unity as we contemplate the whole of nature. Mr. Galsworthy has said that, to gain the feeling of continuity, we must deny ourselves contempt, which is the destruction of continuity. Well, then, we must rejoice at whatever tends to lessen the number of things which evoke contempt from the natural human heart—for it remains wholly improbable that the human heart can ever be reconstituted through the intellect. Contempt grows by what it finds to feed on; and the one chance of purging the soul of hate seems to be through destroying hateful things—intolerance, for example—and making a better world. And to destroy hateful things, it is probably necessary to hate them, or at least to see that they are hateful.

Now, here we come to still another implied weakness in the realistic spirit, if it be true that that spirit means loss of the critical sense. The realist would destroy hateful things by persuading himself that they are not hateful. He does not want to destroy ugliness in order to beautify the world; he wants to teach the soul to find beauty even in ugliness, in order to beautify the soul. And, however little we

may like to admit it, we must see that this surrender of standards and aversions is essentially weak, sterile, and static; at least it is and must be so over any stretch of social history that we can comprehend in one glimpse. Our coldly intellectual and serene modern charity simply does not and cannot get anything done. It is the fiction of satire which has brought things to pass. Why, even the "unofficial sentimentalism," with all its ignorance and bias, has done more than impartial realism—witness *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *All Sorts and Conditions of Men.*

The truth seems to be that only violent likes and dislikes are really dynamic. It may be disheartening, but it is certainly probable, that animal matter reacts most readily and decisively to antipathies pointed with scorn. So it has been, and is, in politics and religion: we do well to entertain the thought that it may be so in literature. It may be one of the strange ironies of evolution that modern man, swayed by a passion to get things done, has grown up to an intellectual contempt for the only possible means of getting anything done. Having the desire, we despise the means—and then try to hide our impotence by belittling the desire. These *may* be the facts; and from this point of view the extreme development of the impersonal outlook may be our modern nemesis—the tragedy of indifferentism.

Two of the three modern artists named a moment ago furnish some evidence of the lack of dynamic force in the modern gospel. Mr. Conrad is put to some pains to explain that his resignation is not in-

difference; that he wills "what the gods will" just as fervently as though he were in the secret of what their will is. And Henry James was frequently charged—very authoritatively by Mr. W. C. Brownell,[1] for example—with having no interest whatever in his characters except as specimens, or in life except as a quarry wherein to dig specimens. *Nostromo* and *Under Western Eyes* are *not* indifferent; nor is *The Golden Bowl* aridly æsthetic. But the modern detachment which is so patently necessary to these novels has too much the effect of making both writers over to a very specialized part of the public.

Still more interesting is the test which the scientific posture received in the career of George Gissing, the first British novelist of considerable eminence to turn fiction into sociology. Gissing wrote about cities, slums, socialism, conditions of labour, the problem of illegitimacy, economic independence for women, the education of the poor, and a host of other such matters, and wrote about them from first-hand knowledge gained through the enforced privations of his own thwarted life. Gissing wrote about these themes, not because he had them at heart, and certainly not because he loved or believed in the folk whom these themes embraced, but because the facts were there and he knew them. Himself by instinct a classicist and something of a hedonist, both sensitive to beauty and aloof from the democratic instincts and ideals, he portrayed the sordid surroundings into which ac-

[1] Essay on Henry James, in *American Prose Masters*. By W. C. Brownell. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1909.

cident had forced him, and wrote one novel after another, in all conscience to be sure, but without love and without hope, saying again and again, in effect, "I show you things that are." His pseudo-biographer says: "The essence of his best work was that it was founded on deep and accurate knowledge and keen observation. Its power lay in a bent, in a mood of mind, not by any means in any subject, even though his satiric discussion of what he called the 'ignobly decent' showed his strength, and indirectly his inner character. His very repugnance to his early subjects led him to choose them."[1]

Gissing is a disciple, almost an apostle, of the realistic spirit. Mr. Chesterton, in his life of Dickens, draws the obvious comparison between the effect of the underworld as Dickens coloured it with his own fierce hates and loves, and the effect of that same underworld as Gissing portrayed it with a resignation akin to despair. Gissing was a brave enough man to "look on with undimmed eyes," but not a brave enough man to hope against hope. He was much too scientific for that. And the result is that his children of apathy and of futility hardly move us at all, hardly stir the heart to those impulses of compassion which result in disinterested action; whereas the poor of Dickens's London are a perpetual delight and a perpetual lesson in brotherhood. It is Mr. Chesterton's view that we long to be succouring brothers to Dickens's poor precisely because they do not need us so

[1] *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, A Record Dictated by J. H. Revised and edited by Morley Roberts. New York: George H. Doran Co. 1912. P. 309.

much as we need them; whereas we are left cold and benumbed by Gissing's outcasts because their need is so much greater than our capacity to give. In the unscientific optimism of Dickens, the difference between joy and despair turns on a smile or a joke; in the scientific pessimism of Gissing, there is nothing that can make any difference. That very impartiality chills us, atrophies the will, and dries at their source the springs of pity. Hardly any parallel could show more succinctly the penalty which fiction has to pay for intellectual poise, when that poise is so sustained as to resemble indifference.

V

I am aware that there are many readers, and some critics, to whom it is offensive to think of fiction as having any such function as I have here ascribed to it, and who see in any insistence that fiction ought to direct the will and inspire it nothing more than a plea for crass cloddish didacticism. Nor do I recede by a step from my own position in relation to didacticism. I maintain, as before, that fiction must be disinterested in the sense of telling valuable truth, let what will come of it, and that a novel which stands or falls by a special plea for or against something is incurably weak-kneed. But this is not to say that a novel is bad because it rouses a burning moral indignation against things which are unquestionably wrong, or a moral passion for things which are un-

questionably right. If any member of "the ineffable company of pure æsthetes" condemns *Nicholas Nickleby* because it had a reformatory effect on English private schools, or against *Hard Cash* because it called attention to the need for reform in English private asylums for the insane, he is a person for whom one is not obliged to throw away one's own conscience. It is something to the credit of the novel if it can show why vice is vicious, and do justice to the virtue of vicious characters; but I do not think this achievement is comparable to that of the novel which fortifies our instinct to place virtue above vice, kindness above cruelty, and discipline above lawlessness. And if realism must go on seeing primarily the sameness in things and persons, to the exclusion of the invaluable differences, then it were a thousand times better to make the best of the old determined and inflexible dogmas of satire at its most dogmatic.

But all this is in criticism of the realistic spirit as it most commonly is, not as it might be. I have named some of the defects and dangers which realism is heir to, and of which we have seen it the frequent victim during the past two decades. But there is nothing in the nature of realism that need commit it irrevocably to a deadening resignation, lack of a critical interpretation of things, and weak or insignificant characters. Interest in all sides of life is in itself a great good; the attempt to interpret all persons as they seem to themselves, and to bring all reality within the radiated warmth of the social emotions of sympathy and compassion, that too is in itself a great

good. The man who is interested in everything does not have to part with his scale of values; great genius can go into the murky places of life without living there perpetually, and without forgetting that they are murky. And when the realistic spirit produces its great individual genius, we shall see the great character once more crowned in fiction; for the creation of great characters, more than any other aspect of fiction, is the function of original genius, and has next to nothing to do with an author's philosophy. Meredith's doctrine of comedy may be a product of Meredith's social philosophy, but Meredith's Roy Richmond is the product simply of Meredith. And when fiction has another Meredith it will have other Roy Richmonds, other Sandras and Dianas and Clara Middletons—and it will have them just the same, though their creator be a theosophist or a Mormon.

It was not my intention then to prove that realism can never escape the difficulties which beset even realists so great as Henry James and Conrad. It is well to state roundly and emphatically the case against realism, and to name the worst possible eventuality. But the temptations of realism are not necessarily its downfall—and besides, there remains the important question whether the realistic spirit has not inherent potentialities which belong to the creative impulse in no other form.

This question I can answer in but one way. The realist does have, in his feeling of harmony with the world-purpose, his sense of oneness with all creation,

a solid philosophical and emotional foundation for his art. And it is a sort of foundation which, because it implies a naturalistic and self-perpetuating world, leaves the artist most free for those facts and phases of reality which mean most in art; that is, he has no longer to be the conscious servant or the unconscious slave of a preordained and everlasting law, and all his care may be for the artist's proper task, to present the immediate and tangible as it is in itself and for his temperament.

Moreover—and this second consideration is still more important—the naturalistic world confers upon the artist the dignity of some added importance. In the world of orthodox conception, the whole was unchangeable whatever became of the parts; the great facts of destiny were established once for all. In the world of naturalism, it was manifest that whatever came to pass must come through man's own efforts; if he wanted a better world, he must make it. The decay of faith means the rise of the social sciences. The fatherhood of God meant that no one of us was his brother's keeper; but the brotherhood of man makes each of us the keeper of all. And the novelist has felt this new responsibility. He has turned from exceptional and unique individuals to the laws of society, the individual in his relation to his age and his group, the intricate problems of our common welfare. Something of this is what Meredith means when he says that "all right use of life . . . is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us," and

that "the novel, exposing and illustrating the natural history of man, may help us to such sustaining roadside gifts."

Something must indeed come of so much striving and groping and piercing of the veils of the elder reticence. It is unthinkable that all this conscience, this selfless and unwearying devotion to truth, should come to naught. The means may be slow, but the end may also be sure. Perhaps the imperceptible increase in understanding, in appreciation of what life is and calls for, may result in great and sweeping changes, in which fiction shall have played its creditable part. So changes do come about: so came, for example, a long sequence of developments in the social history of woman, in which perhaps the novel has not been entirely negligible. The realistic spirit has done more than any of its ancestors for the diffusion of high merit throughout fiction; even without the recurrence of first-rate individual genius, the novel is a more natural instrument for the propagation of ideas than it has ever been, simply because it has put so many skilled pens to work.

We shall know more about the realistic spirit at the end of another decade; for, as a world-spirit in the broadest sense, and not merely as an agency in art, it is now going through its ordeal by fire. In the warring countries we see it becoming an intellectual majority in such men as Romain Rolland and Bertrand Russell, the seers of a new and greater internationalism, even now called upon to bear great burdens of hatred, and bear them with equanimity and

self-possession When the curtain of smoke rises from the battlefields of this war, will such men have shown the road that leads away from the hatreds of the past? or will the thing that has proved itself strong enough to conquer art be, for some generations yet, too weak to conquer the lives of nations and enforce a new gospel of goodwill through the sense of brotherhood?

VII

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY

I

In speaking of tragedy and comedy as elements which have something to do with the purpose and meaning of the novel, and which play a part in its evolution, I am going to assume the common distinctions and differences of elementary definition. Any piece of fiction, we know to begin with, is a record of struggle between opposed forces—the more nearly equal the forces, the more intense the struggle, and therefore the more appropriate for treatment in a work of art. The struggle may take place on a high moral plane or a low physical plane; between separate persons or sets of persons, or between different elements in the same person; with or without the motive of hatred; in fact, either consciously or unconsciously. But some sort of struggle there must be. And we call the result tragedy if the forces with which we sympathize are defeated, comedy if those forces triumph. Tragedy is essentially disaster to the deserving, comedy essentially the reward of the deserving, whether through the fulfilment of their desires or otherwise. Tragedy, to be completely successful, must make a strong appeal to the emotions of fear and sorrow. But the converse is not true: comedy need not be comic in the sense of moving one to laughter.

In some such way as this we may state the simplest set of postulates that makes any adequate intellectual distinction between these two types of composition. But once we have laid down the set of postulates and got the distinction made, we are instantly struck by the fact that the conventions which distinguish absolute comedy from absolute tragedy have never been so marked in the novel, or so important, as they have in the play. The novel, we know, learned its technique from the drama; the principal Elizabethan novels are the work of men who were, with the exception of Lyly, dramatists primarily; and Fielding, who learned a great deal of fictional style and structure from Cervantes, and helped make the novel epic, learned perhaps still more from his long and prolific apprenticeship to dramaturgy, and may be said to have made the novel dramatically epic. Yet it is true that most great plays up to 1800 are quite squarely either tragedies or comedies, whereas most great novels of the same period tend to be not so definitively either one or the other. Or if this is an overstatement of the fact, at least it is true that there are more exceptions to the technical difference in fiction than in drama. And after 1837 the sharpness of the distinction quite disappears from the novel; plays, what plays there are, remain one thing or the other, but novels tend to become a mingling of both. Why is it, one is prompted to ask, that the novel, which learned its rudiments from the play, should have gone farther than the play toward abolishing the hard-and-fast distinctions? Why especially

should there have been so few pure tragedies in fiction?

I find a tentative answer to the second of these questions in the fact that the novelist's audience almost necessarily consists of one person at a time, or at least of one person in a place, whereas the dramatist's audience consists of many persons simultaneously in one place. The physical process of novel-reading is solitary; that of enjoying a play is social. And it seems on the whole to be true that, although every extreme of emotion is intensified when we share it, so that all emotion is potentially socializing, still we can bear to laugh in solitude more easily than to cry in solitude. We can feel happy alone; but when we sorrow, we instinctively crave the support of a whole social fabric made up of sorrow, of which our grief is only one thread. It is quite possible that if novels were habitually enjoyed as works to be read aloud to vast numbers of hearers, they might have a quite different emotional tradition. It may be so; the conjecture is at least of some passing interest.

But this is only a tentative explanation of some things in the past; it is certainly inadequate to explain the breaking down of the distinction between tragedy and comedy in modern drama itself. I think perhaps the habit of reading in solitude did produce originally the well-recognized demand for "happy endings" in stories; but that explanation certainly cannot reach beyond the date at which the drama begins to choose other endings than the flatly tragic and flatly comic. Nor do I think this phenomenon in the drama results

from the fact that the drama, after a long period of insignificance, begins for the first time to learn from the novel, thus reversing the former process.

No: the disappearance of tragedy and comedy in their pure state, both on and off the stage, is a symptom of some larger tendency at work in everything—in life as well as art. If the question were of art alone, we might conjecture that the novel, as the longer and more leisured of the two forms, is automatically freer to present the mingled good and evil, sadness and joy, of life; and that the play, as the more compact and selective form, has to go farther toward artificial exclusion and emotional unity. But, as I say, all such explanations show themselves inadequate when drama begins to follow the same tendency. The fact is, there is a general loss of emotional finality all through art; poetry and painting, as well as fiction and drama, try much less hard than formerly to produce the pure extremes of emotion, and much harder to produce the complex intermediate emotions. I have already pointed out that, generally speaking, emotion becomes proportionately less important in literature and intellectual analysis more important. The loss of pure tragedy and comedy is part of this tendency—for the deeper analysis goes, the less content can it be with emotional finality of any sort; the more it sees that any pretence of finality is counter to the nature of reality.

The important point about both the tragic ending and the comic ending is that they are *endings,* full stops; whereas in life there is no "finis" at the foot

of the page—even death is a full cadence for but one person, and all the interests and issues of which he was a part go on practically without interruption. Life is always re-creating itself out of the past, perpetuating the residua of old things in new shapes, and denying the beholder any sort of conclusiveness whatever. And art, if it is to suggest the nature of life so analysed, must attach less and less importance to beginnings and endings, more and more importance to what comes between them. Indeed, everything does come between them: the only real beginning is the beginning of the world, the only real ending is the end of time. Since the conditions under which the artist works prevent these from being "copy," he gets along with a segment cut out from somewhere between, and frankly recognizes that it *is* a segment, and not a whole.

II

Suppose we undertake first to look with some particularity into the reasons for the disappearance of absolute tragedy in the novel.

It is obvious that the analytic mood which I have called the realistic spirit is more interested in the reasons for human failure than in the mere fact of failure; for the realistic spirit is essentially the inquiring spirit that wants to understand the nature and hidden significance of acts and their obscure consequences. Now, this fact imposes upon the realistic procedure, at the outset, a limitation which denies

the very nature of tragedy and comedy. You can give your undivided emotional sympathy to a person engaged in an effort to attain a certain object or ideal: you can joy in his success or sorrow in his failure, as comedy and tragedy call upon you to do. But you cannot give your emotional sympathy, or any part of it, to a *reason* for anything. A reason is just something that is so; it has no more emotional implications in it than the binomial theorem. Fiction written in the scientific spirit, then, transfers the appeal very largely from the heart to the head; the emotional elements may be present, but the accent is not at all on their emotionality. Most of the emotions present in fiction of the last quarter century exist as facts to be understood,—that is, as experiences of the characters,—not as effects to be felt. This would remain true even if scientific fiction dealt in absolutely sharp beginnings and conclusive endings; the endings would still not be tragic or comic, because they would not be resorted to for the sake of making us feel deeply about them. Fiction parts company with tragedy and comedy just in so far as it transfers its province from feeling to thought.

But of course modern realistic fiction does not keep the finality either, any more than it does the emotion. It cuts out its segment of life in such a way that as much as possible of the whole may be represented, and makes its intensive analysis of that segment for the sake of its bearing on the whole. It is hardly necessary to remind ourselves again that the realistic spirit is the outcome of seeing life as an organic and

evolutionary unit, or that the modern sense of things is the sense of "living in the whole," as John Addington Symonds finely phrased it. Now, it is obvious that there can be no tragedy for the whole. The novelists of an elder generation tried, often with immense success, to rouse the feeling that the world revolved for their few chosen men and women; when the book was over, the world stopped. On laying down the book, one walked about for hours in a daze, until life could assert itself and make things real again. One was made to feel temporarily that the fortunes of those few men and women were everything; they were given to us for their own sake. No one experiences anything of that sensation on reading the characteristic modern novels. They fortify in us the feeling that life goes on just the same—the life of which the characters make a part, and for the sake of which they are called upon to exist. Whatever happens to them, nothing much happens to the world: it is the same world, except that, if the novelist has served us well in his own chosen way, we know it a little better. You cannot get the sense of complete tragedy out of a contemplation of lives presented as part of human society, whatever happens to those lives; because society is safe, and beyond the reach of ultimate tragedy. Society is, to all human intents and purposes, immortal.

Really, then, there can hardly be any such thing as a tragedy written from the modern point of view, with the emphasis on society, unless it is written by a pessimist. The pessimist, who sees the good in man

as mortal, the evil in the world as immortal, can represent the good as extinguished, decisively and irretrievably, by the evil, as Mr. Hardy does in his almost insupportable last novel, *Jude the Obscure.* But mark: even that is not quite bona fide tragedy: for authentic tragedy always tacitly appeals to our feeling that the triumph of evil over good is an abnormality, a monstrous perversion; it evokes a rebellious grief. And pessimism makes that abnormality normal, an expression of the world-principle as the pessimist interprets it; and the properly tragic emotion shrivels from rebellion to a numbed and helpless grief. Pessimism in modern art invariably defeats itself, as a point of view available to art, by turning thus into morbidity. It gives us nothing of the equality which is essential to the tragic struggle; the disaster is predestined.

On the whole the modern spirit, except when pessimistic, is much too broadly analytical to see any individual human failure as unrelieved and hopeless, or any evil without its interpenetration of good. And most of the characters who fail in modern fiction achieve in doing so some kind of success which outweighs the failure—if not for themselves, then for others. The best modern novels follow Dr. Johnson's philosophy of the vanity of human wishes: we may not get out of life exactly what we are trying for, and we certainly do not get what we first began by wishing, but we may get something potentially worth much more. Silas Lapham, the pivotal character of

the great American novel (which, like many things we are always anticipating, is to be sought in the past), fails in his business, sees his new house burn down, and knows that his own short-sighted folly is chargeable with the whole sum of disaster; he is a broken and disappointed man, who will never be whole again. But at the same time he has recovered the faith of his wife, the love of his daughters, and a kind of self-respect which he had begun to lose in the intricate chicaneries of high finance; and Mr. Howells shows him to us at the last making the best of being on simplified terms with life and with himself—at least knowing his own heart as he had not done, and willing to believe that "nothing can be thrown quite away; and it can't be that our sins only weaken us."

The partial success brought out by the partial failure, the moral or spiritual gain wrested from the material or physical loss—this is the objective of most modern fiction that is worth discussing. No disaster is complete so long as there is this to be got out of it. "Living in the whole" and seeing the remoter implications of one's acts means that failures in themselves desperate and, by the older philosophy, irretrievable are to be read as prefaces to hope—the travail of our collective life as it struggles to bring forth some community of good, or the growing pains of rebellious youth in its slow and painful discovery of what life is.

III

The conventions of comedy have remained on the whole stronger in the novel than those of tragedy, just as comedies have remained more numerous than tragedies; but those conventions too have declined as the sense of finality weakened in our contemplation of life, and they may be said now to have vanished altogether. The Victorian novel tended to conclude, as Professor Winchester has put it, with "sugared marital felicity, with 'God bless you, my children,' and ten thousand a year";[1] but more and more there grew upon the novelist a perception that life is disillusion, and books like *David Copperfield* and *Bleak House*, *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis* show us in the last chapter persons who have both gained and lost something as they tried to cope with life; persons who have known defeat and futility, who have renounced and outgrown, and who can see that life has been on the whole good. But the comedy of manners does cling until astonishingly late to its pretence that the story is all told when the last page is turned. The end of the book is the end of the character.

Partly, of course, this effect is produced by the old convention that success in love, crudely denoted by an engagement ring or a marriage license, is the triumphal apex of any life, and that after the hero has "won" the heroine their careers cease to be of interest. This convention has pretty well disap-

[1] *Some Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 299. By C. T. Winchester. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1899.

peared now; success in getting married no longer is assumed to mean success in marriage; and success in marriage is our modern definition of success in love. The disappearance of this romantic illusion about love has been exceedingly good for fiction in one way: it has increased the age, hence the maturity, hence the interest, of the characters, and by so doing has made its picture of life less overbalanced by the sentimental. But, as I say, the convention of the sentimental ending, with its absolute finality, did persist surprisingly long; and to this day one can find new novels in which the last two pages line all the characters up, just before the ultimate curtain falls, in a neat semi-circle across the stage, each ready with a tabloid version of his whole future life before he takes his leave of the reader with a bow. So long as the novel kept to this meticulous habit of accounting for everybody and all his relations, and exhausting the subject of what happened to whom, the characters necessarily assumed the relation of entertainers, not that of fellow-men. Any one can see the superiority, if only on grounds of verisimilitude, of the custom which lets a character, when he has served his purpose to the story, simply drop out of it, as persons drop out of our lives; and which allows us to leave the major personages as folk who may still live on and go about their business—folk whom, for all we know to the contrary, we may meet again somewhere, as we so often meet the characters of Trollope.

Whatever the persistence of the comic conventions, one can see, I think, that they are gradually forced

downward into the popular sentimentalism, out of artistically conscientious fiction; for the same set of logical considerations which applies to tragedy governs comedy as well, and the realistic view of life is the death of either. If life is a mingled affair of profit and loss, why should its counterfeit presentment strike a balance all on one side of the ledger? The form of comedy is too symmetrical, too neat in its efficient disposal of everything, to mirror that life in which nothing is independently so, in which all things are interdependent. The democratic feeling of solidarity, the vision of a common destiny and an indefeasible community of interest, forbids us lightly to compute reality in terms of individual successes. The same logic which refuses to see anything as absolute failure in relation to the whole, refuses to see anything as absolute success. And as life intensifies and reinforces in us, through experience and observation, the sense of its own inconclusiveness, comedy tends to degenerate into pure farce, which, having little or no representative value, may be dismissed as purely decorative, and therefore as having nothing to do with this discussion of purposes and meanings.

On the whole, I think we may say that the hope of a school of really sufficient modern comedy is so fantastically remote as to rank among the impossibilities. For only one thinkable condition of things could produce such a comedy: a practically perfect society, such as Meredith foresaw. In such a society, there would be no loss and no waste; the good of one would be the good of all, and every defeat of something by

something else would be equally a victory for both. Of such community of interest, we have now only the vision. The crucial happenings take the form of contests between things and interests so different that every gain somewhere means loss somewhere else,—contests of class, of race, of power,—and in all these there is at least an undercurrent of the tragic. This the modern observer of life must feel and see, if he is truly to communicate anything to us. Not for him, not for us ever again, perhaps, the old artificial simplifications of unmitigated tragedy and comedy.

IV

The new fashion in endings makes all fiction stop, as the short story is recommended to begin, *in medias res*. To appreciate the difference of fashions through one of its trivial manifestations, compare the closing paragraphs of half a dozen novels by Dickens with those of half a dozen by Mr. Hardy. And the point, small though it is when taken by itself, is indicative of the real change which has come over the artist's attitude toward life. "Begin at the beginning, set everything in order, and end when you are through"—thus the old rationale of composition, a sacrosanct formula. But the modern artist despairs of beginnings and endings; to him everything is middle; he is quite without the sense that every drama can be played up to the ultimate curtain, and that to stage it is an easy thing; and this is the rea-

son for his abandonment of the old conclusive endings which make tragedy and comedy, and for his adoption of the novel or play as being, in the words of an overworked phrase, a "slice of life."

Now, it is a very simple affair to say that a piece of fiction should be a piece of life, and that it should pretend to no completeness which life does not possess; but it is another and much more involved thing to make it fulfil these conditions. To begin with, it implies that impersonality in the contemplation of life can actually be carried to that pitch where the artist understands things as they are, absolutely without any personal bias for one kind of thing as against another, and without colouring anything with the tones of his own temperament. The realist's effort is, of course, to suppress himself and let life speak for itself; his technique is indeed objective. But, in this utter and abysmal philosophical sense, it is exceedingly doubtful whether there is any such thing as objectivity. Professor Warner Fite has some profitable remarks on this point:

"As I prefer to put it, realism stands for denatured human experience. For without denying that something is meant by an unvarnished fact, it strikes me that the phrase as it stands expresses a contradiction in terms. I may distinguish the fact as presented in your varnish from the fact as it appears to me, and thus, by allowing for your varnish and for mine, procure for the fact some measure of independence. But a fact without any varnish whatever seems to me, if facts are to be related to perception, to be no

fact at all; and how the world is to be described from nobody's point of view, I cannot imagine. When I try to state facts in this fashion I find myself in difficulty. The chair, for example, is the favourite philosophical illustration of a very solid fact. Yet when I attempt to describe the chair, I am confronted at once by arms, legs, seat, and back—terms that express a human prejudice; and when I try to dehumanize my description, I seem to find no terms that would make the chair recognizable, none that do not seem to transform a familiar human fact into something rather 'metaphysical.'

"And if it be objected that my way of knowing, or of describing, the chair leaves the real chair untouched, then I am compelled to wonder what that particular reality would be in a world that knew nothing of chairs—in a primitive world, for example, where every one squatted. Something real, I do not doubt; yet still something intelligible, intelligible now from the standpoint of primitive life. If an automobile would cease to be an automobile in a world without carburetors, I cannot see how it could remain an automobile in a world without chauffeurs. When I try to conceive what that reality would be which is wholly unaltered by being known—to distinguish what the chair is in itself from what it becomes when known to be a chair, the cold fact from the humanly familiar and effective fact—I seem to find nothing but that metaphysical, atomic chair—the chair as varnished by the scientific point of view—which is not 'really' a chair and is only doubtfully known.

"It seems, then, that to be a realist is not so simple a task as it appears. We live in a world which we have surely not originated, a real and not a merely imaginary world; and, on the other hand, we live in a world which, just in being real, is more or less familiar and (strangely) more or less responsive to our efforts, and which, in its familiarity and responsiveness, reflects at every point our human point of view. In a word, the real world, for philosophy as well as for literature, is the fruit of a transaction between two parties; and a realism in which either of the parties is ignored is a mere pseudo-realism."[1]

So that when the artist looks at what he calls "the facts of life," he is looking at a congeries of facts *as seen by him;* and, having seen them at all, he can no more keep himself out of them than he can see the back of his own head without a mirror. The relations between and among them, those relations which are all-important to art, are the relations which he sees. We do well to keep these facts in mind when we talk about "pure" realism, absolute "objectivity."

But if realism in this fundamental sense is impossible, it does not follow that it is impossible for the artist to try for it. As a matter of fact, the channel of fiction in the last thirty years is given a quite new turn by his persistent ingenuity in trying for it; and in the process the novelist, unless he has the clearest notion of his own limitations as an observer of life, is especially subject to two dangers arising through

[1] *The Rejection of Consciousness,* New York *Nation,* Vol. 101, No. 2635, p. 773.

the inability of mere observation to do what is asked of it.

To begin with, there is always the danger that a piece of art which purports to be a slice of life merely, will quite miss achieving a design in the artistic sense; will have no pattern except a single observer's experience. And that is assuredly not enough unity for the work of art; otherwise, a stroll up Forty-Second Street in the crowded hours, if one kept one's eyes open, would be a work of art. Many novels, and more and more plays, of the last two decades seem to work toward the ideal of replacing subject-matter by mere matter; the ideal of summing up life one fact after another, as science sums up the world of matter and force, instead of representing life by facts chosen for their representative value. And the result is inevitably inartistic shapelessness. There can be no art without some form other than that arising from the mere juxtaposition of facts and events in real life; because art is, almost by definition and certainly by the nature of its appeal, a selecting and sifting process.

But this is not so serious as one of its implications, the second danger of which I spoke. If art be without a pattern, and remain shapeless except in so far as it gives the artist's report of things which occurred together in factuality, then it will quite have failed to be a criticism of life; that is, to have any centre of purpose or meaning at all. It will be simply life beheld at one remove, and not illumined. The novelist will be supplying material which he himself

does not know how to interpret. If he is baffled by his own copy,—we can hardly call it a creation, for the creator knows what his creatures exist for,—wherewithal shall we be enlightened?

For these two reasons primarily, I am afraid we shall have to admit that the "slice-of-life" method is greater in its claims than in its fulfilment; especially when we remind ourselves again that the novelist, whatever his intention, cannot possibly give us a story which is a slice of life and nothing else. The net result of this ideal is to suppress the elements of choice and accent which are the postulates of art, and to blur and perhaps defeat the purpose which the artist, by virtue of his being a conscious entity at all, cannot help having, even if he does not know that he has it. In undertaking to suppress his own philosophy, he undertakes what no one can perform; because our philosophy is the window through which we have to see everything. Moreover, if he undertake to do that, he will deprive his work of what does most to justify its existence; for it is his province to recreate life in shapes which will show his considered interpretation of it. To say that he has no opinion, or that his opinion means nothing, is to confess mere disintegration and failure.

V

Among the perplexities and dilemmas which attend realism, it is not altogether to be wondered at if the

novelist flounders, uncertain of his way. It is easy enough to adjure him to have faith; it is easy enough to point out to him that in the spiritual history of mankind faith has accomplished more than knowledge; it is easy enough to say that what we need is a renascence of the "will to believe." And it is undoubtedly true that there are many invaluable lessons for the modern practitioner of fiction in the sharply tragic or comic versions of life which make up the history of the novel. But every such plea fails to recognize the difficulty of the modern situation in its play on the modern mind. The modern mind knows too much to throw away what it knows merely in order to believe something that it would like to believe.

Moreover—and this is an incomparably more important point—we are developing a temperament that *loves* reality, that finds it sufficient and swims and floats in it and is buoyed up by it as by faith. It seems to me unthinkable—though "unthinkable" is a very large word, and many unthinkable things have come to pass—that the modern artist can experience any change of heart or of mind which shall result in his picturing life as a thing that comes out even, with so much happiness dealt out there, and so much retribution here, to every man according to his desert. I do not see what hope we dare cherish of a future in which the outcome of things shall be determinate instead of indeterminate; and until that future comes I do not see how we can ask the realist so far to abandon reality as to depict things as happening the

way he would like them to, not the way they do happen. It seems from this angle preposterous to ask the novelist to invoke any forces except those intricate ones which he sees humanly operative in the naturalistic world about him; forces which, so far as he can study them, achieve first of all the perpetuation of life and consciousness, and then the evolution of certain social ideals of conduct and of organization, but never by any chance a degree of progress which does not point beyond to something else still unattained. Life seems to be simply a preface to more life, a perpetual preparing for something that we get no nearer to, a march in a dream, in which we exhaust ourselves with marching and come out where we started. And the only happy man is he who learns to love marching itself, with all its fatigue and its uncertainty of a destination. The old tragic and comic forms reflect the belief in some kind of destination,—except indeed when they are mere profitless fable,—but the new realism must continue, seemingly, to record the march.

The question is, then, whether love of life and of those who live it is in itself enough for a faith. For after all this is the choice: between the temper that loves life and finds it sufficient, and the temper that loves life but finds it insufficient until it is explained and exalted by faith in something outside it. I say nothing about the realist who does not love life at all, who writes about it in distrust or contempt or stupor. Realism has found room for him too, with his several kinds of morbidity and fleshliness and insistence on

the primal brute in man. If he were a factor in the choice, we should have less, not more, to hope for. But the man who does honestly love human nature as it is, and does find the sight of humanity good, so that he really does not want any leverage to be exerted on the world from without; to put the matter quite bluntly, the man who does not want a God, and would regard the existence of one as an unwarrantable and meaningless intrusion into a scheme which means enough just by virtue of its own existence—has that man, in democracy, solidarity, and the sense of kinship with his fellows, enough to hold to, and to build a great art upon?

It is a very important question, because that man is the artist of the present and, in all likelihood, of the future. Meanwhile, it is useful for us to see that his philosophy of life does not cut him off from criticism of life. He is still free to choose what he likes, what he wants, and to express his choice in a shape which shall have consistency and symmetry. If he distrust life, he can only express himself in comedies which turn into farce, and in tragedies which show the ascendancy of the brute over the man. But if he trust life, he is free to single out the elements which inspire his confidence, and to make of them his message; he is free, as Miss Margaret Sherwood says in a finely idealistic essay,[1] for the "enduring realism" of "helping to make greater things real."

After all, it is only in one generation, the present,

[1] *The Timidity of Our Boldness, Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1917, pp. 64–70.

that realism has become apathetic; and three of the greatest men of the literary generation before it, all of them essentially moderns and realists, preached a fine idealism. Meredith had a vision of something amounting to human perfectibility through purely human agencies; Henry James proved that human nature is even now, in those of its aspects which he loved, rarer and finer than it commonly knows itself to be; and William Dean Howells, a generation ahead of even these two in discovering the religion of place, was preaching the most homespun realities and the "wise provincialism" of Royce at a time when patriotism was shame-faced and the intellectual ideal of the Western world was a shallow æsthetic cosmopolitanism. I can explain this paradox, the sluggishness of faith in life in our second generation of realists, only by the enervating weariness which comes upon any movement after it has outlived the inspiration of newness. The older realists welcomed as a challenge the dawn of a world in which man must do all for himself. They took up the defiance with the spirit of youth, always sanguine of its own powers and keen for the fight. Realism is older now, and begins to wonder, to think twice. But one generation is too short a time to be discouraged about.

Meanwhile, we speculate about the new tragi-comedy of the real which must save imaginative fiction from purposeless realism, just as realism saved it from tragedy and comedy in which the purpose was too shallow and too false; and we find a clue to that renewing spirit of fiction, the spirit of idealistic

realism, in such words as these of Mr. Howells, written long ago in answer to Matthew Arnold's comment that there was no "distinction" in our national life:—

". . . I would gladly persuade all artists intending greatness in any kind among us that the recognition of the fact pointed out by Mr. Arnold ought to be a source of inspiration to them, and not discouragement. We have been now some hundred years building up a state on the affirmation of the essential equality of men in their rights and duties, and whether we have been right or been wrong the gods have taken us at our word, and have responded to us with a civilization in which there is no 'distinction' perceptible to the eye that loves and values it. Such beauty and such grandeur as we have is common beauty, common grandeur, or the beauty and grandeur in which the quality of solidarity so prevails that neither distinguishes itself to the disadvantage of anything else. It seems to me that these conditions invite the artist to the study and the appreciation of the common, and to the portrayal in every art of those finer and higher aspects which unite rather than sever humanity, if he would thrive in our new order of things. The talent that is robust enough to front the every-day world and catch the charm of its work-worn, care-worn, brave, kindly face, need not fear the encounter, though it seems terrible to the sort nurtured in the superstition of the romantic, the bizarre, the heroic, the distinguished, as the things alone worthy of painting or carving or writing. The arts must become demo-

cratic, and then we shall have the expression of America in art; and the reproach which Mr. Arnold was half right in making us shall have no justice in it any longer; we shall be 'distinguished.' "[1]

[1] *Criticism and Fiction*, pp. 138–40. New York: Harper and Bros. MDCCCXCIII.

VIII

HUMANISM

I

In discussing the elements of tragedy and comedy in fiction, I hope I succeeded in showing that those elements, if they now existed in anything like the former measure, would derive an entirely changed significance from our changed conception of the whole world, and would in fact have lost a great part of their legitimate appeal to our emotions through our intellect. I implied a connection between those elements as they once existed, and the artist's general philosophy. His comedy denoted a belief, conscious or unconscious, that everything was fundamentally right and would come out right; his tragedy, which showed evil as for the moment regnant over good, drew its compensation from the fact that the triumph of evil was *only* for the moment, an exceptional thing. Thus comedy and tragedy were both expressions, one positive, the other negative, of an absolute and unquestioning faith in the goodness of life. Comedy expressed that faith directly; tragedy showed how many and how severe were the temporary checks it could persist in spite of.

But with the disappearance of that older philosophy and the rise of a new philosophy in which the appearances are the reality and the sum of the appearances is the sum of the reality, absolute tragedy and comedy become virtually impossible. Either, being an ex-

treme, would connote a view of the world which no one can hold, so long as he derives his view from the world itself. And either becomes, therefore, an inartistic misrepresentation of life, a travesty and something like a lie. In brief, tragedy and comedy were, in one way or another, outgrowths of general ideas about fate and life; and it is the change in general ideas that has forced tragedy and comedy out of all fiction which subordinates every ideal to the quest and the study of truth.

There can be not much doubt, I suppose, about the second half of this account. The change in our general attitude has beyond question the effect of forcing out of fiction the old assumptions and definite conclusions and of replacing them by questions and hesitations, research among things knowable and demonstrable. Modern thinking can hardly coexist in art with the unrelieved tragic or comic outcome.

But am I right in the first half of my account? Is it true that the general ideas in fiction have changed, or is it simply that they have just begun to make their way into fiction? Is not the chief mark of the older novel its entire freedom from philosophy of whatever sort, and is not the chief distinction of the older novelists their absolute divorce from every responsibility except the study and mastery of human nature seen through imagination? Is not the present concern of the novel with large general truths a new thing, and may it not mean simply the decadence of the novel because of the lack of great individual artists with their inspired knowledge of the specific? May

not the philosophy in our fiction be our feeble attempt to replace the particular, which means too little to us, with the general, which has not so secure a place in art? Ought not the particular, rather than the general, to be the prime concern of the artist, his inspiration and his home? Or, to narrow the question down to a pocketable and arguable form: Historically speaking, does philosophy belong in the novel at all? Is it either necessary or desirable?

The modern artist answers, of course, that the worker in fiction must have at his command both the general and the particular, that his task is to represent the general through the particular, to master both the facts and their meanings. In the technical jargon, art is both presentative and representative. But this is only his answer, a certain kind of opinion; and it leaves the question where it was, to be squarely faced as an issue on which hangs our acceptance or rejection of a good deal that has happened since 1860, the date when, roughly speaking, the modern novel began to pay tribute to modern rationalism and acquire thereby an intellect and a social conscience.

Need I emphasize the momentousness of the question? Its vast import becomes at once self-evident if we ask it about Shakspere, by whom the Western part of the world has pretty well agreed to let a good share of its theories of creative art stand or fall. Shakspere was not, to be sure, a novelist, even of the Elizabethan school; but our question is large enough to bear on the drama equally, and any one's imagination can bridge the gap between the sort of plays

Shakspere wrote and the sort of novels he would have written if he had lived in the age of Fielding. I choose Shakspere, first because no other one figure is grand enough to provide so crucial a test of any sweeping generalization about art, and secondly because in him it is harder than in any other to trace the existence and the importance of any general theories whatsoever, so that if we find them in him we shall hardly be able to overlook their importance elsewhere.

Let us not be put off with assumptions, such as that any artist, whether he wishes to or not, whether he is prophet and seer or mere entertainer, must, as a first condition of greatness, reflect the principal opinions of his age. Let us assume nothing whatever about Shakspere. Let us recognize two facts: first, that if Shakspere can be shown to have gained as a dramatist through believing something about the soul and its immortality and about the ethical organization of man's life by a will outside man, then the presence of philosophy in imaginative literature has the highest thinkable historical sanction and a greatly lengthened ancestry in modern times; secondly, that, if Shakspere can be shown pagan, conscience-free, and careless of all except the reality in the life and character which he portrayed, then we are entitled to say that an artist's theories of the world, so far from being important, may be only disguises for his insufficiency as an artist. If Shakspere means more when we consider him at bottom a philosopher, then philosophy is certainly at home in art. If, on the other hand, he

means more when regarded, in Emerson's phrase, as "only master of the revels," then philosophy in art may be only an interloper, a skeleton in the closet or a spectre at the feast. In which way are we to accept Shakspere, and how can we make up our minds?

II

Not, I think, by trying to go where so many generations of scholars have failed to find quite what they sought—that is, into the intricacies of textual criticism. Not by trying to prove out of Shakspere's own written words that he believed any particular doctrine that could be construed as a cosmic philosophy. We do not need, in this connection and for this purpose, to convict him of having been orthodox or heretical, Christian or pagan, ascetic or voluptuary, philosopher or fool. Let us fix in our minds the question and its purpose. The question is not what Shakspere believed, or even, exactly, *whether* he believed anything in particular; it is whether the plays as we have them mean more, or less, if we suppose their author to have had some definite theory of human life in its relation to eternity and to fate. And the purpose of the question is that we may find out, in this one crucial instance, whether philosophy has or has not a place in imaginative art. The only method necessary to such an inquiry is the broadly pragmatic one of weighing what Shakspere means to us, as we speculate upon his whole purpose

and significance; and in order that we may escape so far as possible the bias of our own time, and avoid making Shakspere mean simply what we wish him to mean, we ought to look at him through the eyes of the generations of criticism, trying if we can find the key that unlocks the most secrets—not accepting this or that critic's view, however stoutly defended, but setting off one thing against another and seeing what it all comes to when applied to the essential Shakspere, the Shakspere of the sonnets, the narrative poems, and the plays.

Now, as soon as we are ready to give up trying to prove that Shakspere believed or did not believe this or that; as soon as we make it our affair to get the richest available composite view of him and base our judgment on it instead of on any individual interpretation; as soon as we cease to care very much what unexpressed faith he held, and begin to care exceedingly what faith does most for the meaning of his work—what faith, artistically speaking, he *ought* to have held—then we shall be on the verge of a striking revelation. This method, pursued in this attitude, will tell us what we ask, and more. It will answer the question about philosophy,—that is, whether it has eternal fitness in art,—and it will answer with all but the most absolute certainty the question I have carefully refrained thus far from asking,—that is, What *was* Shakspere's philosophy?

The answer contains everything that the textual critics, being not pragmatists but scientists, have sought and must seek in vain, the dramatist's im-

personal aloofness from his material defeating and eluding them at every turn. It is an answer that not only makes the plays cry out to us to be read in a certain way and seen through the window of certain fundamental beliefs, but actually tells us with almost unerring precision what those beliefs must be. At least we can reach, through the answer, this point: we can say with complete assurance either that Shakspere believed steadfastly those doctrines in the light of which the plays crave to be interpreted, or else that he was the lightest, most irresponsible of mortals, with not a shred of consistency to identify Shakspere the artist with Shakspere the man. It is easier for me to believe that those two are one than it is to believe that Shakspere was only a facile prestidigitator, admitting no connection between the words he wrote and the man he was, and achieving by some queer accident forty complete works which merely *happened* to focus themselves on an interpretation of life that he had never thought of and on a belief that he had never held. This alternative seems precluded by the very nature of the relation between the creator and the creation, in art and everywhere else; and therefore I say, The doctrines which make the plays mean most to us and, so far as we can judge, to all time, are the doctrines which Shakspere believed. If, however, any one likes to believe that the doctrines which do most for the plays are the doctrines which Shakspere did *not* believe, he is welcome to that self-indulgence. For all I need to insist on at this moment is the extreme fitness and justice of our letting

the plays read themselves in the light of certain truths which greatly intensify their meaning, even if we doubt whether Shakspere saw those truths.

The central revelation of the plays to us is this: that they are the work of a man who understood—whether with his intellect or only with his intuition makes no difference—that eternity, fate, God, the immortality of the soul, eventual punishment and reward are in one sense simply not man's affair at all; that they are fundamentally unintelligible to his finite mind, the most irrelevant, even if the most enthralling, of his concerns. These things are in the lap of the gods; and man's affair, to state it in some very modern-sounding words, is to "will what the gods will without, perhaps, being certain what their will is—or even if they have a will of their own."[1] We do not in the least know whether Shakspere believed in the existence of God; but we do know that, if he so believed, the meaning of God was in man's need of him. We do not know whether he believed in the immortality of the self-conscious soul; but we do know that, if he so believed, it was the will to immortality that interested him, and not the immortality itself as a hypothesis. In every way he accepts, faithfully and joyously, the finite conditions of man's life here and now, the impassable bounds beyond which reason and knowledge cannot penetrate. We cannot imagine him as being indifferent to anything that was human; but neither can we imagine him as being interested in anything

[1] *A Personal Record.* By Joseph Conrad. Harper & Bros. MCMXII. P. 13.

except *because* it was human. And when he listens to man's "Fables of the Above," it makes little difference whether he takes them as fables or as truths: either way, what touches him most nearly is that they are man's, wrought out of man's own desire or need.

It may indeed be so; this may indeed be the lost or mislaid truth of our Shakspere. I spoke of his critics, the history of appreciation of him. What I had in mind was this: Every attempt to identify the message and the meaning of Shakspere with the tenets of any individual or of any age has resulted simply in the belittling of Shakspere.[1] Assume him Anglican, and you have cut off a part of him that we should all like to keep; assume him Catholic, and you have made him only part of what he seems to us. He is not atheist, he is not theist; that is, he is not primarily either one or the other. In his pragmatism, the question of whether God made man or man made God makes no conceivable difference to anything that can be known or experienced; and every critic who has attempted to define Shakspere by a definite formula of faith or of doubt has subjected Shakspere to a limitation to which nothing in Shakspere gives any sufficient sanction.

Now, when you scan one after another these special and restricting interpretations of the master and pick out the weakness in each; and when,

[1] For an accessible summary of such attempts, see *Shakespeare Criticism* (Heminge and Condell to Carlyle). Introduction by D. Nichol Smith. Oxford University Press. 1916.

having done that, you search for the formula which escapes all the weaknesses and leaves Shakspere meaning the utmost that he can mean when left free to interpret himself, you find that the only theory which robs him of no glory, the only one which leaves him in full possession of all that we actually find in him, is this theory of his humanism. The Shakspere we know through the plays and poems was a man who could have made the epigram, "If God had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent him"; for Shakspere had the supreme revelation that, whether God did exist or whether man did invent him, the effect on man's conscious life in the knowable world is precisely one and the same. This is the revelation that makes our Shakspere, not Anglican, not Catholic, not demonstrably pagan or Christian, Epicurean or Stoic, but pragmatist by temper, and by intuition humanist.

III

When, in talk with a sharp-witted young student of literature, I ventured to broach this theory that, for Shakspere, man's conscious life was the focal point of all reality, that everything in the universe, real or fancied, was valuable to Shakspere only in so far as it touched man, and that all attempts to confine the meaning of Shakspere by any other formula resulted in a belittlement of him to the critic's own preconception, I was met, expecting indeed nothing less, by this rejoinder: "But how do you know that this humanistic interpretation of Shakspere is not

also a belittlement of him? Why isn't it just as narrow for the 20th century to find him humanist as it was for the 18th to find him Anglican or atheist? Aren't you simply proposing that every age shall find Shakspere to be whatever it happens to prefer? And can you ever have a unified Shakspere short of a unifying philosophy that shall reconcile all the discrepancies and all the prejudices?''

It is of course true that we have no more right to interpret Shakspere in our way than Dr. Johnson had to interpret him in his. But there are some points to be urged in favour of our interpretation against the sum of all the others.

First, it seems to me important that our interpretation leaves room for what is essential in the others. There is nothing whatever in Shakspere to prohibit my identifying him with any religion I happen personally to believe in, provided I see that, whatever the religion be, his emphasis is upon its meaning to somebody, to man. Shakspere may have believed that death is the end of consciousness, or he may have believed that it is the transition to eternal life; but in either case it is the end of the temporal life, which has, in either case, to be lived in the same way. He may have believed that God was one or that God was three, that God is love or that God is vengeance; but none of these differences has anything whatever to do with his conception of godliness. Humanism, the creed in which all the religions and all the philosophies meet at a common point, the sum of the elements common to them all, is at once reconcilable with each

and greater than any. It is the one philosophy which uses every other to the glorification of life—of life, which alone means anything to art. A sceptical age will understand Shakspere as portraying the courage of man living on his mote of dust in empty space, serenely unafraid of the dark out into which he must presently go, and heartening himself with his fables of light beyond the darkness. A believing age will understand him as portraying the courage of man living by the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for. But what they must both understand, if they are to have what Shakspere gives, is his mastery of the one thing—the courage of man. Man is the genesis of all things accessible to art; and the task of Shakspere is to tell all the truth, not about the religions and philosophies as facts, but about their meaning to man and their effect upon him—the effect, I mean, which they have upon him whether they be true or false, historical or apocryphal. This is the only reading of Shakspere which exalts him as interpreter of what is quintessential in our tangled life —as which, nearly all criticism admits him to be supreme.

Secondly, a historical consideration. The Renaissance came late to England, but with intensity. And when it came it put England almost at once in possession, not only of the classical learning, but of all the modern humanistic embroidery upon it of a century of continental Renaissance. Everybody who has studied even superficially the Cinquecento in Italy knows how merely nominal was the subservience of

philosophy to religion, and how orthodoxy was subtly corroded by speculative doctrines preached from within the very Church, and calculated to deceive the very elect. The Church was largely given over to materialism; and, so long as its temporal power was not endangered, it was not above housing and feeding the philosophers who gave it intellectual prestige even while they undermined its doctrinal foundations. The Church was cannily making to itself friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; and it was an age when one could hear atheism and the mortality of the soul preached in high places, in discourse which paid to the Church no other tribute than the use of its ritual and its vocabulary. It was an age of humanism and free-thinking; and one of its chief symptoms is the delight of intellectual men in metaphysical speculation for its own sake—that is, for the training of the mind in subtlety and agility and poise, and for the sense that the human intellect could get beyond and outside everything. In short, it was an age when philosophy and scholasticism were nothing if not humanistic; and from a thousand references in the plays and sonnets, and from the general delight of Shakspere in metaphysical hair-splitting, sometimes purely verbal, one can trace his profound kinship with these developments, his triumphant joy in the intellect as an instrument giving man sway over space and time.

I urge this point against the suggestion that the humanistic interpretation is only our 20th century way of circumscribing Shakspere, of outfitting him

with our parochial philosophy. As a fact, our philosophy comes much nearer to naturalism. But then humanism was in the air; he would have been more than man, or less than artist, if he had wholly escaped it. His humanism can be accounted for historically without going farther back than his own 16th century. With time, we could extend the ancestry of humanism to classical Greece and Rome—to the great harbours of ancient cultivation in which all that is most precious in the Middle Ages has its origins, and in which, as Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch points out in his book *On the Art of Writing*,[1] the moral and spiritual life of our own time has its immovable anchorage.

IV

Both philosophically and historically, then, the humanistic reading of Shakspere has justification, a most persuasive reasonableness. And when, finally, we come to the supreme works themselves, we find almost everything to corroborate, almost nothing to deny. I pass over all but a hint or two of the strong tendency which Shakspere everywhere shows to let his vivid realization of man's temporal life take the form of a complete and untroubled agnosticism about everything else. There is plenty of evidence that he conceived death as a sweet oblivion, a surcease from that of which life is full enough; and the sweet finality of that repose, the profound immobility of that sleep

[1] New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

immune from even the fear of dreams which should prove life not utterly extinguished, are lyrical notes sounded always with a tenderness which must have had something to do with Shakspere's own desire. Death is to him "death's dateless night"; and again and again he expresses the purely humanistic conception of immortality in contexts where, if he had believed in any other conception, he must have given some hint. All his sonnets of the love of men and women are haunted by this note, of beauty in the very finiteness of the experience; and in the sonnets of remembered love, there is nowhere expressed the hope of reunion after death, or of any renewal except that of memory re-creating out of its need the desired shape, the lost presence.

And all of the phrases which, isolated, bear some seeming hint of orthodox faith, seem in their contexts to crave another interpretation. The exquisite antiphonal dirge in *Cymbeline* speaks of a task done, a home reached, wages ta'en; but that home, it at once appears, is the grave's "quiet consummation," and the wages are oblivion for the consciousness and renown in the memories of others. "Thou hast finished joy and moan," "To thee the reed is as the oak."

> "No exorciser harm thee!
> Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
> Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
> Nothing ill come near thee!"

— such negative immortality is the reward, and the only suggestion of a positive immortality is that thor-

oughly humanistic faith that the living can confer perpetual life upon the dead by not forgetting their lives.

Even the famous and controverted Sonnet CXLVI, with its cry of triumph over death,

"And Death once dead, there's no more dying then,"

seems on analysis to be a plea for intensifying the inward life of the soul by something very like a religious ascetic's mortification of the body. This sonnet is one of many records of the duality of Shakspere, of the perpetual conflict in his life and mind between a starry poet, dreamer, and idealist, and an earth-bound respectable citizen who took thought for the morrow, both tenants of the same clay.

"Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?"

Rather, let the soul live on the loss of its servant, the body; let the soul, renewed in its own ardent extra-physical life, glory in the body's failure and decay; do not devote the powers that are at best short-lived to making costly provision for the worms which are "inheritors of this excess." Instead, "feed on Death, that feeds on men"; that is,

"Within be fed, without be rich no more."

The sonnet comes down, then, to a simple assertion that when we live most imaginatively and least materially we rob death by leaving so much less for palpable dissolution, and so much more for the cherishing memories of other men to seize on; we kill death by

starvation. And this idealistic humanism seems to be everywhere Shakspere's principal thought about eternity.

When we come to the ghosts, we find in them only confirmation of this same idealistic humanism. Now, it is true enough that Shakspere may have accepted unthinkingly—or, for that matter, thinkingly—the superstition of his time. He may easily have believed in the reality, even in the corporeality, of spirits of the dead. But it is to be noted, first of all, that that was essentially a pagan, not a Christian, superstition; a belief, not in immortal spirits, but simply in the unlaid ghost. Oblivion was coming; but there was some debt left unpaid in the flesh, some wrong unrighted, which stood between the tortured spirit and the longed-for "quiet consummation" of the grave. The failure to have achieved oblivion was always in itself a tragedy; and the ghost's one concern was to shake off those evil dreams of reality which had persisted even beyond the body's corruption, in order that it might lie down to an eternity of rest.

Whether or not Shakspere did accept this superstition is a matter of little consequence. His plays neither gain nor lose anything of great importance, whether the ghosts in them are staged as visible apparitions or as ideal and symbolical perceptions in the minds of the actors. For, whatever Shakspere's own attitude toward the pagan concept of the unlaid ghost, he found the only way to cheat it of its grossness. The ghost always exists, not to show something

about a life other than that which our senses know, but to show something purely spiritual and moral about this life. Its revelation is of guilt or of duty here and now, not of a promised hereafter. The ghost of Hamlet's father exists for Hamlet, the ghost of Banquo for Macbeth; they exert a further pressure, the one upon a feeling of responsibility, the other upon a feeling of guilt—which feelings exist already as products of causes not supernatural. And so it is everywhere in the plays: the meaning is the same whether the ghost be understood by the audience as having an objective or a subjective existence.

In this point of fundamental meaning, as in so many other points, Shakspere is our exact contemporary. His evident sense of the grossness of using ghostly apparitions to prove the hereafter is like, for example, Mr. Howells's sense of the same fact as Mr. Howells expresses it in *The Undiscovered Country* and, later, in *The Leatherwood God*. *The Undiscovered Country* is a novel about the phenomena of "spiritualism" which, like all wise novels about that theme, comes to the conclusion that such phenomena, regardless of their authenticity, are in their nature and significance wholly irreligious. Intelligence lapses from faith in it, Dr. Boynton explains, because "it is not spiritualism at all, but materialism,—a grosser materialism than that which denies; a materialism that asserts and affirms, and appeals for proof to purely physical phenomena. All other systems of belief, all other revelations of the unseen

world, have supplied a rule of life, have been given for our *use* here. But this offers nothing but the barren fact that we live again. If it has had any effect upon morals, it has been to corrupt them. I cannot see how it is better in its effect upon this world than sheer atheism. It is as thoroughly godless as atheism itself, and no man can accept it upon any other man's word, because it has not yet shown its truth in the ameliorated life of men. It leaves them where it found them, or else a little worse for the conceit with which it fills them."[1] And again: ". . . as long as it is used merely to establish the fact of a future life it will remain sterile. It will continue to be doubted, like a conjurer's trick, by all who have not seen it; and those who see it will afterwards come to discredit their own senses. The world has been mocked with something of the kind from the beginning; it's no new thing. Perhaps the hope of absolute assurance is given us only to be broken for our rebuke. Life is not so long at the longest that we need be impatient. If we wake, we shall know; if we do not wake, we shall not even know that we have not awakened. . . . 'The undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns.' . . . and Hamlet says no traveller returns, when he believes that he has just seen his father's spirit! The ghost that comes back to prove itself can't hold him to a belief in its presence after the heated moment of vision is past! We *must* doubt it; we are better with no proof. Yes; yes! The undiscovered country—thank God, it

[1] *The Undiscovered Country*, Chapter XXIV.

can be what these babblers say! The undiscovered country—what a weight of doom is in the words—and hope!" [1]

Dr. Boynton's modern humanistic notion of religion and of its meaning in no wise shifts the accent of Shakspere. How could there be a more sweeping illustration of Shakspere's success in making his works embody a philosophy which is all things to all men, in which all the creeds and all the doubts forget their differences and meet at a common centre? This alone, of all possible interpretations, abolishes the question whether he was orthodox or heretical, and places its accent on the one indubitable reality belonging to universal ideas: the reality derived, not from their source or their absolute truth, but from their knowable effects on human imagination and will.

V

Some such things I believe that Shakspere believed. At all events the plays, so interpreted, contain the most utter truth with the least arguable matter. And if that be true, we cannot doubt the right to its place of the philosophy which so interprets them. This humanism, putting in abeyance all the questions to which there is no final answer, and content to dwell in the realm of knowable things, is the perfect philosophy for art; for it alone can range widely, as art must do, among such actualities as imagination and

[1] *The Undiscovered Country,* Chapter XXIV.

faith,—in a word, all the more spiritual parts of our human organization,—and at the same time refrain, as art must do, from postulating an objective existence for the other-worldly creations of imagination and faith. Humanism makes room for every dream, every hope; yet it leaves humanity and the human struggle illustrious enough to enthrall us for their own sakes, as they cannot do under a creed which makes man a mere footnote to the rest of creation or a caprice of the will of God.

In the glare of light which this reading of Shakspere throws upon the nature and the history of imaginative fiction we can decipher, it seems to me, a broadly complete rationale for the philosophy therein. Humanism—a philosophy, if one insist, made out of the rejection of philosophies, the refusal to consider any cosmic doctrine except as a force in human life—humanism is almost a synonym of the artistic temper itself; because, like the artistic temper, it exalts the self-sufficiency of the real without limiting its boundaries. By the same logic, the other possible philosophies, supernaturalism and naturalism, are made to fall into their places in relation to art. They clash with it precisely where humanism re-enforces it; and their centre is elsewhere than its centre. Supernaturalism undermines the significance of that reality which is necessarily the subject-matter of art by reducing our temporal life to an infinitesimal fraction of the cosmic scheme; and all art produced under it has tacitly the nature of mere diversion or beguilement, meet for hours of "moral holiday" perhaps, but in-

herently lacking in moral dignity, and almost frankly contravening the laws of the universe in which it is conceived. In a word, supernaturalism is an infirm motive power for art because it reduces to a hollow pretence the necessary assumption of art that the temporal is important; only the eternal really counts. And naturalism, to which man is only a "disease of the dust," has also, in a somewhat different way, the defect that it reduces man to too puny a stature to be greatly tragic or comic. But still more it has the fault of belittling the spiritual in man and exalting proportionately the physical, the material. And, just as supernaturalism either stifles art altogether or else treats it as something to be tolerated along with other concessions to mortal frailty, so naturalism tends to circumscribe art by confining it to "realism"—either the foul realism of those who are panegyrists of the brute in man, or the sterile literalism of those who report what is, exhausting the material facts of creation and ignoring our questions about the possible sense of it. Supernaturalism refuses to take art seriously enough to justify it; and naturalism refuses to take the higher faculties of man seriously enough to let art justify itself.

In actual practice, the best fiction produced under each of these two philosophies has been saved by the failure of the artist to take his philosophy with entire seriousness. In a completely naturalistic world, probably no art could be produced at all; for naturalism is interested in the results which are most logically and visibly the effects of natural law, and least in-

terested in civilization, which humanism calls "an organized revolt against nature." A large body of naturalistic fiction is written to belittle those very art-producing faculties to which it is indebted for its own existence. And as for supernaturalism, I suppose it obvious that of the century of novelists from Fielding to Thackeray very few applied their faiths more seriously to the business of writing novels than the average nominal Christian of the same period applied his Christianity to the business of daily living; and both Fielding and Thackeray, theoretically sound moralists though they are, derive from the contemplation of human naughtiness an impish delight which must greatly have perturbed them if their theories had really come first.

The fact seems to be, then, that writers who were not humanists with their whole minds have profited by the extent to which they were unconscious humanists in their tastes—the extent, that is, to which their temperaments failed to square with their consciences. No one supposes that the exquisite high comedy of Jane Austen is invalidated by the failure of its world to show any particular correspondence with the orthodoxy of her ultimate beliefs; or that Dickens's democratic vaudeville is seriously interfered with by his Trinitarianism; or that Meredith's criticism of society as it is constituted seems less momentous because he was in part a mystical optimist, working from a belief in human perfectibility toward no less an end than human perfection. These facts, examples of the clash between great art and an underlying

philosophy which does not help explain its greatness, are sometimes alleged as proofs that philosophy has nothing to say to art. What they really prove is that no other philosophy than humanism is tenable in the work of fiction. They reaffirm concretely the points here asserted theoretically: the failure of naturalism and of supernaturalism to locate their centres of interest where fiction must locate its centre, and the coincidence at every point of the humanistic doctrine with the artistic feeling. It is inevitable that something should be withdrawn from the sanction and the dignity of art in conditions where it cannot exist in whole-hearted fidelity to the belief which nominally engenders it; and this withdrawal is one meaning of our ancestors' prolonged distrust of the novel on moral and religious grounds, and of an odd parallel to that distrust in the patronizing condescension toward the arts in our modern world of naturalistic belief used to enthrone material competition.

A point to close on, for re-enforcement of the argument about the inclusiveness of humanism, is this: However sceptically one may regard the utter self-identification of art with a particular way of thinking about the sense of creation, at least one can see the legitimacy of ideas in fiction as objects, as material. Even the unmoralist in æsthetics has only to be interested in seeing fiction enlarge its province and its powers, in order to perceive that the novel must treat any and all ideas as soon as it becomes interested in protagonists who hold them. Four names will serve roughly to show the acquisitiveness of fiction. Defoe

investigated the physical life, actions; Richardson added the emotional life, sensibilities; George Eliot the moral life, conscience; and Meredith, our modern of moderns in this particular among others, the intellectual life—ideas. Meredith identifies himself unreservedly with certain general ideas: a kind of pagan optimism, a kind of nobly unfaddish feminism, a set of prerequisites to the existence of a perfect society, a faithful acceptance of the evolutionary and biological unity of all things. He would have been glad to stand or fall by the validity of those ideas. Yet ensues the paradox that Meredith stands though the ideas fall, simply because he made his novels so searching a record of how some distinguished and unique minds did actually think. The novels remain as humanistic embodiments of important realities, even if they pass as an apologia for Meredith's own mystical optimism.

At this point of his achievement Meredith reaches the stature of the grandest humanists, including Shakspere. For he had a comprehensive enough mind to make his works last for what is in them, no matter what should become of the reasons behind them. This greatest triumph of the artist is also the logical consummation of the humanist.

IX

DESIGN

I

If I have succeeded in making a just account of the place which properly belongs to philosophy in fiction, I have brought out at the same time the most cogent of the reasons why the shape of fiction as an art has undergone certain marked changes during the past half century. Up to 1859 roughly—the year of the first novel of George Eliot, and a date which has in the history of fiction something of the momentousness which we ascribe to it in that of science—the philosophy in fiction is felt either as an intruder or as a guest whose presence is hardly suspected at all; though, as I tried to show, that unsuspected presence is more advantage than disadvantage. Probably all of us do, whether we know it or not, have a philosophy, even if only a philosophy of negations; and, having it, we perforce look at the world through it. This unawareness is the attitude of the drama and of the novel before George Eliot—except, of course, in homiletic, allegorical, or symbolistic pieces such as *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* or *Rasselas*. But from the time of George Eliot the philosophy in fiction is intensely aware of itself, determined to make the most of itself as an opportunity, not merely put up with itself as a necessity. And from the moment of this conscious acceptance and welcome of philosophy, an entirely new set of considerations begins

to govern the shape of fiction. The novel, whenever it deserved its hold on us, has always combined truth with pleasure; but when the emphasis shifted from pleasure to truth, there appeared a new determining principle of inclusion and exclusion, a new standard of criticism for the devices and expedients which fiction had evolved during its vassalage to pleasure.

I can best state the change as an enormous decrease of the accidental and arbitrary, and a corresponding increase of the causal. The shortest name for the transition is George Eliot, who was doing perhaps her best work during the life of Thackeray, and nearly all of her work during the life of Dickens, but who is animated by a more modern spirit than either. George Eliot represents the universe naturally conceived as an organism; man as a subordinated unit of its evolution and not, philosophically, the pivot of the whole; the intricate dovetailing of cause and effect everywhere; the facts of good and evil as products of remote and invisible causes in heredity and environment; the ungovernable sway of chance in human lives, reducing them, whether it destroy or fulfil, to mere pawns in an inscrutable game;—in fine, the character which is fate and the fate which is above character. To express with any fulness this duality of the world and the individual, she must abandon the worn machinery of coincidence and mystery, the various wires and levers by which the novelist himself remains palpably in control of his spectacle; she must substitute for these the machinery of human will and natural forces. To begin with, she must have a nar-

row scene, where nature itself reduces life to a manageable simplicity; and hence she follows the provincial ideal by which Jane Austen so unconsciously profited—how wondrously we know when we stop to think that we are now only just learning how high, even if how small, is the place rightfully hers. Then, she must study not merely the actions of men and women: she must study the *directions* of their lives, the corrosion of character by its worst or weakest, all the implications of her accustomed theme, "the idealist in search of a vocation"; and hence she must reduce the number of events until none remain except those which have profound importance as illustrating the direction of the lives concerned—the episodes are reduced in number, and mean individually more. Finally, she must investigate not only the physical realities of actions and the emotions that underlie them, but the moral principles that underlie emotion and choice; she must go more deeply than the novel has been wont to go into the moral and intellectual life of her protagonists, in order to bring forth by reflection and analysis those realities which can be expressed but imperfectly, or not at all, in action; whence Savonarola in his cell, Bulstrode on his knees. This patient and fruitful search for the causality in life is the distinguishing contribution of George Eliot to the novel.

In her we see, then, at least three significant changes in the shape of the novel, changes which it has mostly retained and intensified since the conclusion of her work: first, the narrow scene, appointed

for rigorous specialization in a few personæ; secondly, the elimination of deliberate artifice in the manufacture of plots, and the attempt instead to bring the action out of the personæ and the clash of their wills and personalities; thirdly, enlargement of the scope and importance of analysis of motives and feelings.

That such are indeed the chief traits of George Eliot as a novelist is shown by our instinctive objection to her few lapses into the factitious and the accidental. Sir Leslie Stephen says of a certain episode in Romola: "Poor Romola, in her despair, gets into a miscellaneous boat lying ashore; and the boat drifts away in a manner rarely practised by boats in real life, and spontaneously lands her in a place where everybody is dying of the plague, and she can therefore make herself useful to her fellow-creatures. She clearly ought to have been drowned, like Maggie, and we feel that Providence is made to interfere rather awkwardly."[1] We all share the feeling; but it is a feeling which we should never experience with the same force in connection with Dickens or Thackeray—writers from whom we expect a full measure of everything that can by any possibility be put into the work of fiction. That we should have the feeling in connection with such palpable contrivances in George Eliot as this extraordinary boat of Romola's, shows in itself how essentially the novel had altered its shape by 1864—how unmistakably the philosophi-

[1] *George Eliot* (English Men of Letters Series). By Leslie Stephen. New York: The Macmillan Company. P. 138.

cal point of view had even then brought about the modern change from the casual to the causal.

II

This general change that has come over the form of the novel is, then, the substitution of a higher unity for a lower. The effect of naturalistic philosophy in the novel is to re-open the whole question of the devices and subterfuges of the novel in their relation to the integrity of the whole; to re-open it as a subordinate phase of our other inclusive question, the relation of art to life. Only with the ascendancy of naturalism did the novel attain any philosophy of art to speak of; and it is only with the attainment of a philosophy of art that the novel makes its transition from artifice to truth—stops asking "What will be effective, how can the attention be won and stimulated?" and begins to ask "How best can truth be served, the nature of things unravelled?" I do not mean of course that the matter of pure strategy in the novel can be ignored, for if the story does not capture our interest it can certainly do nothing to us at all: but the emphasis becomes transferred from one of these questions to the other, and the question of technique in the novel is being elevated along with the purpose and meaning of the novel as a whole.

In one way it may even be said that questions of technique become all the while more important and more exacting; for the modern notion of truth-telling

cuts off all those resources of palpable contrivance in technique upon which so much of the plot-interest depends in Fielding and Dickens. And the result is that the modern practitioner must have, in one particular at least, a fuller equipment than these; for he must know how to win and hold the interest without such aids through the historical, the conventional, and simply by the amount and value of the truth he finds to tell. This elevation of the whole problem of expedients and devices in the novel means, as I have said, the substitution of a higher unity for a lower. Unity of purpose takes the place once held by the unity of trickery and elaborate organization. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that naturalism makes the same difference in the novel as in our conception of the world: it replaces arbitrary creation by the organic evolution of a thing which grows into certain forms by its own inward nature, as it were by a kind of self-compulsion.

It would be interesting but futile to speculate how far and with what consistency these changes could have been followed out in the novel without Continental influences. The history of these changes since George Eliot is, as a fact, largely an affair of comparative literature; for it is evident that the novel in France and, presently, the novel in Russia did incalculably much to furnish both the ideal and the means.

So far as I can express the difference between these two influences, it lies in the more fundamental simplicity and naïveté of the Russian masters, the more

sophisticated and more technical proficiency of the French. It is as though the French had achieved unity as a purely artistic triumph, because of a compulsion to exhaust the possibilities of order, symmetry, and austere perfection as things desirable and matchless in themselves; whereas the Russians achieved it through a compelling need of reducing everything to an elemental simplicity, for the sake of getting outside it, mastering it: one feels the Russian temperament as less various and more strong, more tenacious and less nimble. While Flaubert and Maupassant were achieving unity by whittling down their subject to essentials, ruling out all that failed to contribute to its predetermined harmony, Turgenev and Dostoevski were achieving unity by relating their larger masses of data to some central and magnetic principle of truth. The French temper is to pick and choose, and then weave carefully the chosen elements together into a pattern; the Russian temper is to take everything there is to take, and put it into a single basket large and strong enough to carry it all. And so, while the '70's and '80's saw British novelists learning something of their technique in France, it also saw them learning perhaps even more of the rationale of technique in Russia. Mr. Howells and Henry James, greatly as they were soon to differ in their use of what they learned, did beyond question learn much, and derive a permanent impetus in certain modern directions, first from Balzac, and then from Turgenev—to name only the most representative of influences.

The distinction between French and Russian art is perhaps not so absolute as I have made it sound: what distinction ever is so absolute as one's account of it? But there is, I think, a measurable truth in my general point, that the Russian character has the greater capacity for obsession, the greater need to see all reality for the time being through a single pair of spectacles, the greater capacity to be interested in everything. And what I wish mainly to point out is this: that by the middle '90's, when one of these Continental influences was at its culmination and the other was at least beginning to exert its leverage, then, in the decade when the names now most accredited were just beginning to appear on title-pages, the modern novel in English had pretty well determined its present bent toward the Russian largeness, the Russian inclusiveness. Our younger novelists had learned from France certain of the fine fitnesses of treatment, of order; they had learned from Russia, *through* France, to practise these upon larger and more specialized pieces of subject matter than the French masters since Victor Hugo have commonly treated.

That, on the whole, this choice of emphasis between two influences has resulted to the advantage of the novel, I may perhaps suggest by bare statement of two considerations: first, that the Russian inclusiveness of matter and of event is most like the Victorian inclusiveness which is our chief tradition in the novel, so that full adoption of the French method and ideal might have meant, relatively, the impoverishment of

the novel; secondly, that the largest possible interpretation of what is relevant to the subject of a novel best serves our modern notion of life's complexity, and gives the novelist his best chance of seeing life steadily and whole. In 1895 British fiction had its choice of whether it should see highly specialized specimens of life and make of each a perfect picture, or consider highly representative and typical specimens of life and see them with a single eye. The problem was unity by selection versus unity by interpretation. Our novelists mainly chose to interpret large segments of the typical; and on the whole the developments in the form of the novel during the twenty years since that choice crystallized have shown that they did well.

III

Suppose we consider separately, for a moment, these two lessons which the English novel was trying to learn in the last quarter-century of Victoria's reign—the French lesson of unity through internal fitness or congruity, the Russian lesson of unity through the insistence upon a centralizing and directing purpose. Of the details of that first lesson learned in Paris, we can name and illustrate three of some technical importance.

The first is oneness of *tone* or pitch—the necessity of keying all the parts of a given subject within an emotional gamut which does no violence to the reader's sensibilities. If we desire an interesting example

of work performed under the most conscientious and single-minded zeal for such oneness, we have it in Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's completion of Stevenson's unfinished *St. Ives*—a task executed with such loving circumspection that one can not tell, by internal evidence, where the break occurs. That Stevenson would have appreciated this beautiful competence shown in imitation of his style is proved by his sensitiveness to every one of his own failures adequately to imitate himself. Speaking of an earlier and slighter work, *Prince Otto,* he says in a letter to C. W. Stoddard:

"How does your class get along? If you like to touch on *Otto,* any day in a by-hour, you may tell them—as the author's last dying confession—that it is a strange example of the difficulty of being ideal in an age of realism; that the unpleasant giddy-mindedness, which spoils the book and often gives it a wanton air of unreality and juggling with air-bells, comes from unsteadiness of key; from the too great realism of some chapters and passages—some of which I have now spotted, others I dare say I shall never spot—which disprepares the imagination for the cast of the remainder.

"Any story can be made *true* in its own key; any story can be made *false* by the choice of a wrong key of detail or style: Otto is made to reel like a drunken —I was going to say man, but let us substitute cipher—by the variations of the key."[1]

In this informal comment Stevenson, a Scott with

[1] *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson,* Vol. II, p. 321. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1911.

a French artistic conscience, proves how unquestioningly he assumed that the modern sense for unity of texture is necessary, not only to realism, but also to work done in a romantic tradition. There is a kind of story which, if it is to exist at all, demands that the hero shall be invulnerable; there is a kind of modern costume romance in which it is strictly proper that the last chapter shall show the hero converted to the religion of the majority. Perhaps one does better not to write that kind of romance; but if one does write it one must keep it in tune with itself, even at the cost of admitting conventions which are in themselves silly. In their own irresponsible realm, the coincidences and mystifications of Wilkie Collins are not only justifiable but inevitable; *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* may not be fiction of a high order, but they are at least consistent with themselves, and works of art in so far as they are of their own kind. In short, there is no art without form; and, for modern purposes, form is fusion.

This general truth becomes still more manifest as I approach a second and more specific agent of unity, the single point of view. It is not enough that the material reported upon be consonant with itself: it must harmonize with the person who reports it, whether that person be the author himself reporting omnisciently,—a method which obviously suffers from lack of verisimilitude, since no one can reasonably be expected to know *all* the facts or be everywhere at once,—or an observer created by the author expressly to observe, or a character in the story. The omniscient

method tends to disappear, as we should expect it to in a period when the novelist finds his reward in the meanings of facts rather than in knowledge of the facts themselves. We no longer see the novelist "stand about in his scene, talking it over with his hands in his pockets, interrupting the action, and spoiling the illusion in which alone the truth of art resides,"[1] as Mr. Howells says of Thackeray's and Trollope's habit of personally conducting the story. The novelist who can be in all places at once and follow simultaneous actions going on apart from each other is too palpably the inventor of his facts; and, as a result of this feeling about him, we see the subplot practically disappear from modern fiction, and the action reduce itself to so much as can be comprehended from a single human point of view working under the ordinary human limitations. We are interested, not in the mechanism of complex actions, but in the moral causes and effects of actions as shown in a life or a few lives followed continuously. The culmination of this interest thus far appears in the later novels and tales of Henry James, all of which are interpreted for us through the observing consciousness of some person, not the author, who is present in the story. To these we may add the more recent practice of the direct colloquial method in some of the best work of Mr. Joseph Conrad.

Thirdly, the modern craftsman has learned that there must be fusion among the various agents of the

[1] *Criticism and Fiction*, p. 76. New York: Harper & Bros. MDCCCXCIII.

narrative process—the talk and action, the portrait-painting and characterization, which go to make up the actual written story. We have learned that the one of these elements which predominated in the earlier Victorians and in Scott, and which has latterly threatened to reduce our magazine fiction to a bare skeleton of dialogue—we have learned that the element of talk is the thinnest, most meagre of all in real and lasting communicativeness. Even when talk is sifted down to the printable economy and compactness, we require a bushel of it to convey what the novelist's own interpretation of his facts can give us in a tenth of the room; and the narrator whose dialogue is his principal stock-in-trade is not only copying the merits of the drama in conditions where they become positive defects, but he is also crowding out "the golden blocks themselves of the structure"—his own weighed, condensed, and reflective analysis. This complaint is one that Henry James, whose sense for such things was of the most subtly critical, had often to urge as his principal criticism of Mr. Howells's technique; and in one of his *London Notes* [1] he urged it with even more force against the decidedly inferior dialogue of Gissing.

This third point is interestingly argued by Scott in his Preface to *The Bride of Lammermoor,* in an imaginary conversation between Pattieson the novelist and Dick Tinto the painter. Scott inclined on the whole to Pattieson's view of talk as against descrip-

[1] *Notes on Novelists,* pp. 441–43. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1914.

tion; but the modern artist, who has more reasons than Scott had for wishing to weave a firm pattern, and no reasons for wishing to weave one of loose ends, agrees almost completely with Tinto.—

"'Your characters,' he said, 'my dear Pattieson, make too much use of the *gob box;* they *patter* too much'—an elegant phraseology, which Dick had learned while painting the scenes of an itinerant company of players—'there is nothing in whole pages but mere chat and dialogue.'

"'The ancient philosopher,' said I in reply, 'was wont to say, "Speak, that I may know thee"; and how is it possible for an author to introduce his *personæ dramatis* to his readers in a more interesting and effectual manner, than by the dialogue in which each is represented as supporting his own appropriate character?'

"'It is a false conclusion,' said Tinto; 'I hate it, Peter, as I hate an unfilled cann. I will grant you, indeed, that speech is a faculty of some value in the intercourse of human affairs, and I will not even insist on the doctrine of that Pythagorean toper, who was of opinion that, over a bottle, speaking spoiled conversation. But I will not allow that a professor of the fine arts has occasion to embody the idea of his scene in language, in order to impress upon the reader its reality and its effect. On the contrary, I will be judged by most of your readers, Peter, should these tales ever become public, whether you have not given us a page of talk for every single idea which

two words might have communicated, while the posture, and manner, and incident, accurately drawn, and brought out by appropriate colouring, would have preserved all that was worthy of preservation, and saved these everlasting said he's and said she's, with which it has been your pleasure to encumber your pages.'

"I replied, 'That he confounded the operations of the pencil and the pen; that the serene and silent art, as painting has been called by one of our first living poets, necessarily appealed to the eye, because it had not the organs for addressing the ear; whereas poetry, or that species of composition which approached to it, lay under the necessity of doing absolutely the reverse, and addressed itself to the ear, for the purpose of exciting that interest which it could not attain through the medium of the eye.'

"Dick was not a whit staggered by my argument, which he contended was founded on misrepresentation. 'Description,' he said, 'was to the author of a romance exactly what drawing and tinting were to a painter; words were his colours, and, if properly employed, they could not fail to place the scene, which he wished to conjure up, as effectually before the mind's eye, as the tablet or canvas presents it to the bodily organ. The same rules,' he contended, 'applied to both, and an exuberance of dialogue, in the former case, was a verbose and laborious mode of composition which went to confound the proper art of fictitious narrative with that of the drama, a widely

different species of composition, of which dialogue was the very essence, because all, excepting the language to be made use of, was presented to the eye by the dresses, and persons, and actions of the performers upon the stage. But as nothing,' said Dick, 'can be more dull than a long narrative written upon the plan of a drama, so where you have approached most near to that species of composition, by indulging in prolonged scenes of mere conversation, the course of your story has become chill and constrained, and you have lost the power of arresting the attention and exciting the imagination, in which upon other occasions you may be considered as having succeeded tolerably well.'

"I made my bow in requital of the compliment, which was probably thrown in by way of *placebo,* and expressed myself willing at least to make one trial of a more straightforward style of composition, in which my actors should do more, and say less, than in my former attempts of this kind. . . ."[1]

Scott's use of this last concession in *The Bride of Lammermoor,* where he seems really to make a conscious attempt at repairing the proportions of his earlier work, may go farther than is commonly perceived toward accounting for the peculiar distinction of this most lyrical of his tales; though it still remains odd that Scott could be on the whole so indifferent a practitioner of that which he so shrewdly perceived and argued.

[1] From the "Preliminary" of the Introduction to *The Bride of Lammermoor.*

IV

So far I speak of a general ideal of craftsmanship which is more French than English, and of some of its practical effects on English fiction. Now let us see what was the general effect of the Russians. We shall find it to have been sweeping; for it resulted in the creation of a strikingly new form in fiction, a form which we may take the risk of calling the novel of the future. At all events it is the novel of the present, and decidedly *not* the novel of the past. It is a form which has evolved, not from the novel alone, but from the novel and the short story—both assimilated in a certain way under the mediation of some modern ideas, and under the intervention, as it seems to me, of direct influences from Russia.

The novel of the past, as we know, formed itself by an ideal of dramatic structure, with a crisis at or after the middle—at all events far enough from the end so that there could be a definite change of direction in the plot. That is, the crisis served as a new initial impulse, from which the action proceeded under changed conditions to its end. *Romola*, which I have named already in a different connection, is an orthodox example of the dramatic structure carried out on a vast scale. Romola's life of struggle proceeds in a certain direction and toward certain ends until the events which involve the deaths of her husband and her god-father and her flight from the city; then it proceeds in an entirely different direc-

tion through the stages of her effort to re-plan her life and make a new place for herself. This is the general contour of the older conventional novel, as of the drama; and the short story differs from it chiefly in that it has no change of direction, but follows its theme straightforwardly to a crisis which is also the end. The older novel was two stories, or a story and its sequel; the short story is one story, cumulative in its effect.

The new novel is a sublimated short story. It avails itself of the novel's fulness of treatment; it may run to any length, even the inordinate length of the Victorian novels; but its theme is single, and it aims at rigid unity of effect—the unity which comes of one direction inexorably followed, and the use of all the material to illustrate a single principle. It replaces contrast and suspense with intensive thoroughness and the strict logic of causal succession. It is the short story under a microscope, the short story on a vastly enlarged scale. Henry James, an avowed disciple of Turgenev, was the first to practise this form in English; Mrs. Wharton, his disciple, has continued it; Conrad, whose literary kinships are of the Continent, has given it enlargement and several new characteristics; and our bookshelves are being filled with new works of extraordinary formal merit, and in length from 40,000 to 200,000 words, which prove on analysis to be, not novels of the older dramatic figuration, but short stories or *novelle* of the most rigid specialization in a single phase of life or character. The material of a novel may be present; but the purpose is

to exhaust the meaning of a single issue, not to range freely over the whole complexity of life.

Mr. Howells, whose mind has always turned with interest toward the arts as they are practised in Europe, despite the strong and sane provincialism of his own creative work, recognized these tendencies more than a quarter of a century ago, and was pretty directly writing of them when he said:

". . . each man is a microcosm, and the writer who is able to acquaint us intimately with half a dozen people, or the conditions of a neighbourhood or a class, has done something which cannot in any bad sense be called narrow; his breadth is vertical instead of lateral, that is all; and this depth is more desirable than horizontal expansion in a civilization like ours, where the differences are not of classes, but of types, and not of types either so much as of characters. A new method was necessary in dealing with the new conditions, and the new method is world-wide, because the whole world is more or less Americanized. Tolstoi is exceptionally voluminous among modern writers, even Russian writers; and it might be said that the forte of Tolstoi himself is not in his breadth sidewise, but in his breadth upward and downward. *The Death of Ivan Illitch* leaves as vast an impression on the reader's soul as any episode of *War and Peace,* which, indeed, can be recalled only in episodes, and not as a whole. I think that our writers may be safely counselled to continue their work in the modern way, because it is the best way yet known. If they make it true, it will be large, no

matter what its superficies are; and it would be the greatest mistake to try to make it big. A big book is necessarily a group of episodes more or less loosely connected by a thread of narrative, and there seems no reason why this thread must always be supplied. Each episode may be quite distinct, or it may be one of a connected group; the final effect will be from the truth of each episode, not from the size of the group."[1]

The effect of this kind of intensive specialization is a singular and most amazing rebirth in imaginative literature of something very like the classical unities of time, place, and action. The unities as they were observed in classic drama and in neo-classic imitations justified themselves in æsthetics and were employed primarily for æsthetic reasons; they served the work which obeyed them, not as agents of a closer contact with the real life of men and women, but as agents of an inward and self-sufficient harmony in the work itself. Marlowe and Shakspere, when they cast aside the unities in order to get nearer to life, were freeing art from the shackles of convention. But the modern artist has got round to the beginning of the cycle; we see in him the unities recovered and reconstituted, though for different reasons and in a new spirit. He tells one story and one only because he wants to get to the bottom of something, not because of any fancied ideal of artistic symmetry; he takes a short and continuous stretch of time because he wants to

[1] *Criticism and Fiction*, 142–43. New York: Harper & Bros. MDCCCXCIII.

preserve unbroken the chain of causality in his action, not because he thinks the flight of time in the work of art should match the flight of time in real events; he keeps his scene narrowed and single because he wants to correlate man causally with his environment, not because he considers a change of scene inherently inartistic. The reasons are different; but the result, in concentration, in focus, is strikingly the same. This change in the shape of the novel, a change brought about by new ideas and a new purpose, constitutes the superiority of the modern novel as a form over any other large unit of imaginative expression whatever; and it is one of the principal reasons for hoping that genius of the future will find more to facilitate, and less to impede, its utterance than it has ever found.

V

Have I seemed thus far to be slighting the purpose and meaning of fiction in favour of its subordinate means and methods? To do so has been far from my intention: I have wanted to speak of these lesser things just in so far as they are governed by the greater, and to treat the form of the novel only as it is ruled by the spirit. If I have not succeeded before this point in showing that our modern way of writing novels is a natural outcome of our modern way of looking at life, I shall have done so when I have noted once more that the service of de-

sign or technique is to help fiction represent life—not to copy it, or idealize it, or prove something about it, or make a substitute for it, but to represent it. Just as the details of an artist's subject are chosen to represent the whole subject, to stand for more than they are, so the whole subject is chosen to represent as much as may be of life. Other things equal, the worth of a piece of fiction is proportioned to its wideness or wealth of reference. The more it stands for, the more it *is,* even though it be slight in itself. And shall we not say that the purpose of modern technique, which has on the whole the effect of curtailing the subject-matter of the individual story, is to extend and amplify the *meaning* of the story, and, through thoroughness of treatment, to make the artist's little stand for more than ever? That economy of means and material should have led to enlargement of the representational power of the novel seems to me to be the most significant of recent general results in fiction.

It is worth while, I think, to make room here for three examples of that result. Let the first be Mr. Hardy's *Return of the Native,* one of the most powerful novels of localized "atmosphere" in any language. The motif is set in an opening chapter, "A Face on which Time makes but Little Impression," a description of Egdon Heath, the barren waste in which the action takes place. This motif dominates the whole tale. As on the heath, so in the souls of the characters, and especially in the soul of the heroine, Eustacia Vye Yeobright, night and day wrestle together in a sort of interminable twilight. The in-

scrutable face of nature throughout the book is used to symbolize Mr. Hardy's view of the inscrutable way of the cosmos with the whole human species; man's daily life in a natural scene which is and must remain a riddle to him is subtly suggestive of our common life in an immensity which we can neither understand nor change; and the changelessness of that indifferent and mocking face of nature, which neither smiles nor frowns while men and women play for a moment their puny parts under its fixed gaze before they are swallowed into it, is an image of the eternal futility which Hardy saw as perhaps the one unifying reality of our common life. This is not symbolism, and it is not allegory: it is suggestion used to the end of representation on the grandest scale. It weaves a philosophy of the whole into the patterned history of a handful of lives.

My other two examples, both pre-eminent novels of the first decade of this century, bring us to the threshold of the present. As unlike as possible from each other in substance and in minor points of technique, they are alike in that the masses of subject-matter of each are invoked by a single principle and dedicated to its illustration. In each instance, the principle is a large truth about life. Mr. Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale* has on the surface as defiant a breach of unity as a novel could well contain; for there are two heroines of widely different and widely sundered lives, in large part separately observed and recorded. But there is a unity which comes out of this disjunction, and it is this: the life of Constance

and the life of Sophia, separate and unlike as they are, arrive ultimately at an equal and a similar understanding of what life is. Life is something that we never understand until we have lived it; and when we have lived it we see that it is something which we could never have lived at all if we had understood it first. That, says Mr. Bennett, is our common lot and the ultimate wisdom; and it is a triumphant illustration of the modern kind of unity in purpose and effect that he should have brought so large a sense of community out of material inherently so scattered, so little subjected to the other and lesser modern practices of economy.

Mr. Conrad's *Nostromo* is likewise a vindication of unity through principle and purpose, in defiance of technical regulations which are useful in their place. Here is a story of which, materially speaking, the very mainspring is romance—a story of a misgoverned tropical republic of the New World, with a silver-mine and a horde of pirates, with revolution and counter-revolution and any number of violent deeds and thrilling rescues, as its principal machinery. It is the representational use of all this that turns it into realism. For the country of the tale, Costaguana, is the modern world in symbolic miniature; and the triumph of the mine of silver over a group of individuals, some of whom loathe it and some covet, some of whom it drives to perjury, to treason, to murder, others of whom it despoils through its tragic effects on those whom they love—this triumph of the precious metal is the ascendancy of material interests in mod-

ern life, the tyranny of the economic, the corrosion of greed, the downfall of the idealist through his personal dependence on those whom material interests can corrupt or destroy. *Nostromo* is a pageant and an epic of a civilization founded on commerce; and if half its greatness is in its mastery of the immediate facts, at least we may say that the other half is in the sweep and clarity of its synthetic representation of a good share of modern existence in a world whose most cherished precept is to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market.

X

"ENTERTAINMENT"

I

THROUGHOUT this series of discussions of the purpose and the meaning of fiction I have had a great deal to say about such things as the author's attitude toward his work, the status of fiction in this generation and that, and the general evolution of the novel upward; but I have taken hardly any notice of the corresponding changes which must have occurred in the reader of fiction, if the novel has achieved anything of its real purpose. I have dealt with the more and more truth, the higher and higher kind of truth, which the novelist is always putting into his writing: now let me deal with the amount and kind of truth which the reader must, in justice, get out of his reading.

We have seen, if my account has attained any coherence, that the evolution of the novel has been an affair of struggle between opposed forces, and that the struggle has constantly been shifted to a higher and higher plane, every bit of ground won representing a new ideal for the shape or the spirit of the novel, or for both. First came the struggle between the method of extravagant fancy and the method of realism of circumstance; and the novel won truth to fact. Then came the struggle between satire and the scientific attitude; and the novel achieved its present realism of spirit, its truth to the nature of things. The whole trend throughout these stages is from ir-

responsibility toward responsibility, or, as I said, from a lower and more personal conception of truth to a higher and more impersonal.

Now, it is my present point that this brief history of what has happened to the novel is also a brief implied history of what must have happened to the reader. If we leave out the baser demands of the commercial market, which always remain about the same except for superficial vogues, and which almost automatically create the supplies they desire, it remains pretty true—at least truer than in almost any other kind of transaction—that the supply of fiction creates the demand. The novelist not only serves his public: to a large extent he makes it, and makes it after his own kind. And it seems on the whole a true generalization that the less responsible fiction of the time, roughly, before 1860 sought and found a less responsible reader, the more responsible fiction since that time a more responsible reader. We know that only within forty years or thereabout has the reading of fiction become completely respectable; and that means that the aim of the novel has become elevated, which means in turn that it finds its mark in a better and better part of the reading population. The sort of person who read history, biography, and memoirs a half century ago, and by no means novels, reads novels now as a quite natural recourse. I am not at this moment debating whether the change is good for him: but it is certainly a good thing for the novel, and indicative of its gradual self-improvement, that the reader who had nothing to do with it in the last

generation could hardly do without it in this. The change means, to put it shortly, that once upon a time the truth-loving person read fiction, if at all, without reference to his love of truth, in order to forget, to take "a moral holiday," to be "taken out of himself"; whereas now he can read fiction precisely to intensify and reward his love of truth, however exacting that may be. Fiction once offered, principally, amusement or diversion through escape from responsibility; now it offers, at least the best of it does, the pleasure of responsibility understood, accepted, and welcomed.

Naturally I do not mean that the great novelists of the past failed on the whole to tell truth, or that their readers failed to find truth in them. A great artist is, almost by definition, a person who sees that on the whole truth is more entertaining than falsification. But they worked, those great novelists, quite frankly under the ideal of entertainment, as we see by the places where their work does not ring true. Those are invariably the places where they thought they saw a clash between truth to human nature and diversion for the reader. Where they thought a pretty lie would please the reader better than the restraint of sober verity, there is no conflict at all—they tell the pretty lie. Whereas now they would tell the sober verity; and the reader—this is the important point of difference—would accept it as conveying more and better pleasure than the pretty lie. The modern reader who is worth writing for does not readily pardon his realist for turning sentimentalist.

This change in the novel-writer, and in the reader's requirement, was expressed inimitably by Mr. Howells a quarter of a century ago in some passages about the tradition of the holiday story as written by Dickens and others. There is no doubting the genuineness of Dickens's literary conscience, judging it by the highest standards extant in his time: yet any common reader of 1918 can see the tinsel in what Dickens's public took for gold. Says Mr. Howells, after noting that it was Dickens who "rescued Christmas from Puritan distrust, and humanized it and consecrated it to the hearts and homes of all":

"Very rough magic, as it now seems, he used in working his miracle, but there is no doubt about his working it. One opens his Christmas stories in this later day—*The Carol, The Chimes, The Haunted Man, The Cricket on the Hearth,* and all the rest—and with 'a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,' asks himself for the preternatural virtue that they once had. The pathos appears false and strained; the humour largely horse-play; the character theatrical; the joviality pumped; the psychology commonplace; the sociology alone funny. It is a world of real clothes, earth, air, water, and the rest; the people often speak the language of life, but their motives are as disproportioned and improbable, and their passions and purposes as overcharged, as those of the worst of Balzac's people." And again, in droll and specific irony on some particular ingredients of the Christmas tradition in stories:—

". . . the Christmas season is meteorologically . . . favourable to the effective return of persons long supposed lost at sea, or from a prodigal life, or from a darkened mind. The longer, denser, and colder nights are better adapted to the apparition of ghosts, and to all manner of signs and portents; while they seem to present a wider field for the active intervention of angels in behalf of orphans and outcasts. The dreams of elderly sleepers at this time are apt to be such as will effect a lasting change in them when they awake, turning them from the hard, cruel, and grasping habits of a life-time, and reconciling them to their sons, daughters, and nephews, who have thwarted them in marriage; or softening them to their meek, uncomplaining wives, whose hearts they have trampled upon in their reckless pursuit of wealth; and generally disposing them to a distribution of hampers among the sick and poor, and to a friendly reception of chubby gentlemen with charity subscription papers. Ships readily drive upon rocks in the early twilight, and offer exciting difficulties of salvage; and the heavy snows gather thickly round the steps of wanderers who lie down to die in them preparatory to their discovery and rescue by immediate relatives. The midnight weather is also very suitable to encounter with murderers and burglars; and the contrast of its freezing gloom with the light and cheer indoors promotes the gaieties which merge, at all well-regulated country-houses, in love and marriage. In the region of pure character no moment

could be so available for flinging off the mask of frivolity, or imbecility, or savagery, which one has worn for ten or twenty long years, say, for the purpose of foiling some villain, and surprising the reader, and helping the author out with his plot. Persons abroad in the Alps, or Apennines, or Pyrenees, or anywhere seeking shelter in the huts of shepherds or the dens of smugglers, find no time like it for lying in a feigned slumber, and listening to the whispered machinations of their suspicious-looking entertainers, and then suddenly starting up and fighting their way out; or else springing from the real sleep into which they have sunk exhausted, and finding it broad day and the good peasants whom they had so unjustly doubted, waiting breakfast for them. We need not point out the superior advantages of the Christmas season for anything one has a mind to do with the French Revolution, or the Arctic explorations, or the Indian Mutiny, or the horrors of Siberian exile; there is no time so good for the use of this material; and ghosts on shipboard are notoriously fond of Christmas Eve. In our own logging camps the man who has gone into the woods for the winter, after quarrelling with his wife, then hears her sad appealing voice, and is moved to good resolutions as at no other period of the year; and in the mining regions, first in California and later in Colorado, the hardened reprobate, dying in his boots, smells his mother's doughnuts, and breathes his last in a soliloquized vision of the old home, and the little brother, or sister, or the old father coming to meet him from heaven; while his rude companions

listen round him, and dry their eyes on the butts of their revolvers."[1]

This material and this spirit hardly please the least critical of us now. Do not such facts prove that the conscience of art has changed for the better, and with it the conscience of the reader, and that both have become more like the conscience of ordinary self-respecting intercourse?

II

"Intercourse" is, I think, a happy word for the newer relation between the writer of stories and his public—especially if one recall the high sense given that word by Stevenson in his essay on "Truth of Intercourse." We conceive the artist as a fellow-citizen with the gift of profitable utterance, instead of as a hired public performer for hours of relaxation. We elevate him, in short, to the rank of a fellow-worker.

It is perhaps worth while to note that this new attitude, which gives the artist a more natural place among us and stresses his likeness to ourselves instead of his differences, is a return part way to what must have been the original idea of his function. The primitive artist was a spokesman of many, their voice and expression; his task it was to interpret them to themselves, as they drew together for battle or celebration, mourning or festival. He was the com-

[1] *Criticism and Fiction*, pp. 175–76; 163–66. New York: Harper & Bros. MDCCCXCIII.

posite consciousness of the people given an articulate voice. When national or racial unity declined, his function became non-integral; and his continued existence became dependent on the favour of some individual patron who supported him. In the second stage the artist was owned by an individual, as a sort of rare exhibit whose existence conferred distinction on the owner. About the time of Dr. Samuel Johnson's famous declaration of independence, this long stage of patronage and fulsome dedications gave way to a third, much more difficult to describe, much more tenable for a self-respecting workman, but still of limited and imperfect dignity. In this third stage the relation of patronage continued, only the whole book-buying public took the place of the individual benefactor. This conjoint ownership of a writer by a whole people—one sees it in the mid-Victorian English attitude toward Dickens—involves the idea that the artist is a queer being with an incomprehensible knack of giving people something they want; an amazing prodigy of nature whom the public takes pride in owning and exhibiting, but whom it does not feel in the least obliged to understand provided it pays him, and whom it would not greatly care to resemble. The artist of this period is like a freak in a circus, whom people pay to stare at, or like an expensive entertainer who can be "had in" for the evening, but whom no one would dream of having as a guest.

To a certain extent it is true that we are still in this third stage; one sees a relic of it in the popular

feeling that an author must continue to emulate his first successes. We felt abused and taken advantage of when the late William De Morgan, who had pleased us with four striking novels in what we chose to call "his own vein," suddenly betrayed us into buying his fifth novel, *An Affair of Dishonor,* written in an entirely different vein; we begrudged him his technical and legal right to be something more or something less than himself, to be the part of himself that we were not paying for.

But, despite this instinctive tyranny of the public toward authors who have identified themselves with a particular sort of fiction,—or, as we put it in our crude commercial vernacular, a particular "line of goods,"—one sees some hopeful signs of a fourth stage, more like the first, in which the artist shall be a self-respecting fellow-worker with the rest of us, judged by the much or little value of his intercourse with us, and willing, since it is necessary, to take the pay that comes from the social value of his work. This view of the artist, the only one which brings truth of intercourse to the front, is of course a product of our socialized view of everything. It is bound to be given an enormous impetus in a time like this, when unity of conscience is so quickened and intensified among great masses of men; for at such times, not only does the artist express what we want, interpret us to ourselves, and read for us the meaning of life and struggle and death better than the politician or the inarticulate soldier can do, but he also dies for us and with us. The young poets whose names this

war has added to the roll made illustrious by Sir Philip Sidney have done something for the place of the artist in our civilization; and Rupert Brooke buried in foreign soil on the hilltop of his Ægean isle is perhaps doing as much for the reader of the future as Rupert Brooke writing:

> "If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England."

Hardly ever again, after the artist has shown himself as real in his living and dying as in his writing, can we go back to the patronizing system which sets him apart as a matinée idol—an impersonator and not a person.

III

All this change of attitude is the flat rejection of art as diversion merely, of art for escape. What we must ban and debar and obliterate is the wholly false notion that life and literature are two largely separate things that have least to do with each other. The man who writes a book is living most fully while he does it; it is a wholly false classification that says he is dealing in life at second-hand, while the man who penetrates the Arctic Circle or the sources of the Amazon is dealing in it at first-hand. A story is probably not worth writing unless it represents the writer's closest contact with living reality; and it is certainly not worth reading if it merely takes the reader divertingly "out of himself." We speak of

"the world of books." It seems to me an unconsciously cynical phrase, a tacit sneer—as though reading a book were an interlude in living, a gap in reality, while travelling seventy miles an hour or over-eating rich foods were "real"! A worthy book was written by somebody who was living more fully when he wrote it than nine-tenths of us ever live; and if we cannot read it in fulness of life, if we read it because we have "nothing to do," then, heaven help us, we are doddering in the wrong generation.

What, then, is meant by the saying that "The purpose of all art is to give pleasure?" Why, simply that we must give "pleasure" a large enough definition. We must make it mean the pleasure of the right person, and the right person taken at the right time. Mr. Brownell speaks[1] of the readers who rest the whole justification of Edgar Allan Poe on his success in making their flesh creep. Doesn't he make one's flesh creep? they ask. Well, says Mr. Brownell, that depends entirely on whose flesh they are referring to. There are all sorts of pleasures; and the sort of person who reacts decisively to the best is ordinarily left untouched by the less good. Sociologically, we are all agreed that the highest pleasures are not those which "take us out of ourselves," but those which take us more deeply into ourselves and into each other; not those which make us forget, but those which quicken and inspire remembrance. In other words, the highest pleasures are the social emotions which come from

[1] Essay on Edgar Allan Poe, in *American Prose Masters*. By W. C. Brownell. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909.

a rational and truthful view of our status as fellow-mortals—pity, compassion, fellow-feeling, fraternity, solidarity; the pleasures of "truth of intercourse." It is well to remind ourselves that the highest development of civilization is two or three men sitting in a room talking.

This sense of community on which the great joys depend is recognized in all great art, and especially in the moral compensations of great tragedy. The social emotions of which I am speaking may often be merged with pain: every one of them demands at least a person with the capacity for generous pain. Most of them are compound of pain and pleasure. Pater speaks of "living at the point where all the highest sensations meet"; the fully pleasured life is what it is because the pleasure is full, not because the pleasure is all of one kind. Any sort of self-discipline or renunciation converts a lower pleasure into a higher. The prototype of all such truisms is in David's words, "Can I drink the blood of my friends?" as he pours the water on the ground, renouncing a sensual pleasure for a spiritual; or in the words of a greater than David, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

And—if I may be trivial again after being perhaps unduly serious—it is quite as true that the person who renounces the reading of silly books, or the reading of serious books in a silly frame of mind, is renouncing a low pleasure of self-gratification for a higher pleasure of self-development, and getting rid of

a chocolate-cream philosophy for the sake of a sense of what life is really made of—which is the thing that real books are made of too.

IV

Of course no one means to deny fiction a reasonable self-indulgence in the matter of moral holidays. The Pipe-Smoker in one of Mr. Kenneth Grahame's *Pagan Papers* speaks of cigarettes as being all very well "when you're not smoking"; and books there be too, ranging from those of Thomas Love Peacock to those of Mr. W. W. Jacobs, which are all very well when you're not reading. Every member of every one of the learned professions, and all writers and lecturers especially, must have many intervals of looking forward with intense relish to the blessed relief of having for a time no opinions to express, or even to hold; and it is a notorious fact that every teacher of the young spends the month of May reviling his occupation and threatening to buy a farm. Was it Belfast in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* who, in the revulsion of feeling produced by such an accumulation of hardships as was the lot of seamen in ships that sailed, threatened to "chuck going to sea for ever and go in a steamer"? Anything, done hard enough and long enough, proves the advantage of doing it no more for a season, and of doing anything else whatever; but the implicit meaning of all vacations is that temporary irresponsibility is one kind of preparation for being

permanently responsible. It is work that gives a vacation all the meaning it can ever have. And the literature of pure diversion, likewise, derives its sense from its relation to the literature of interpretation. We read the literature of escape—often with a feeling that the function of the mere entertainer is in some sort a sacred one, a ministry—precisely because of everything that it is not; thus tacitly admitting that it is an exception and not the norm.

A book from which I have already quoted, *Criticism and Fiction,* puts the concession to irresponsibility into terms partly historical when it says: "I am not saying that what may be called the fantastic romance —the romance that descends from *Frankenstein* rather than *The Scarlet Letter*—ought not to be. On the contrary, I should grieve to lose it, as I should grieve to lose the pantomime or the comic opera, or many other graceful things that amuse the passing hour, and help us to live agreeably in a world where men actually sin, suffer, and die."[1] Note, though, how Mr. Howells goes on: "But it belongs to the decorative arts, and though it has a high place among them, it cannot be ranked with the works of the imagination—the works that represent and body forth human experience. Its ingenuity can always afford a refined pleasure, and it can often, at some risk to itself, convey a valuable truth."[1]

It is the higher of these two implied kinds of pleasure that art must more and more steadfastly hold for

[1] *Criticism and Fiction,* p. 116. By W. D. Howells. New York: Harper & Bros. MDCCCXCIII.

its ideal. To be art at all, it must of course minister to pleasure; but there always remains the difference between getting out of life to seek pleasure and seeking to bring pleasure into life. One of the most distinguished surgeons in America, and at eighty years one of the hardest-working men, objects to the theoretically ideal day of eight hours to work, eight to play, and eight to sleep, on the ground that himself requires at least sixteen hours to play. No one supposes that work of any kind is all beer and skittles; at least no one does who has worked; and some there are who make a sad and labourious business even of doing nothing at all. But work must be done, somehow, on a basis of indomitable joy in it, and as our only possible means of self-expression in terms of life. And so must be done the work of the novelist.

It is one of the distressing anomalies of the writer's life, and in fact one of the chief drawbacks to it, that the work which he does with joy is not received by the public, whatever the joy it gives them, as work. The sober business of his life is the exception, the interlude, in theirs. The irony and the incongruity of this clash between the purpose of fiction and its meaning are expressed by a gifted contemporary writer in these terms: "The automobile and the telephone, the accomplishments of Mr. Edison and Mr. Burbank, and it would be permissible to add of Mr. Rockefeller, influence nowadays, in one fashion or another, every moment of every living American's existence; whereas had America produced, instead, a second Milton or a Dante, it

would at most have caused a few of us to spend a few spare evenings rather differently."[1] Such a consideration is felt as belittling; even a writer who affects to despise the public which gives him his living must feel its interference with a kind of plain human dignity which we all like to have. It is a much more serious consideration than that raised by Stevenson in his famous "Letter to a Young Gentleman Proposing to Embrace the Career of Art." To win one's living by pleasure given to others is indeed a difficult sentence to accept, unless one have illimitable faith in the quality and the effectual value of the pleasure. But even the professional athlete is better off, in this one respect, than the professional story-teller: at least, what his public accepts from him is the same thing which he is paid to offer, and such dignity as he has does not suffer the affront of seeing his work daily misconstrued, taken for something else altogether.

The general acceptance of fiction as a part of real life is a high and remote possibility, not an impossibility; and its very remoteness is a reinforcement of every reason why the novelist must hope and strive for it. There can certainly be no hope of a public better than the artist himself conceives and works for; and, as a fact, the changes already produced in the reader by the writer's greater and greater demands upon him are noteworthy enough to justify the hope that in this fundamental matter also the

[1] *The Certain Hour.* By James Branch Cabell. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. *Auctorial Induction,* p. 32.

artist can, by being creative enough, make whatever kind of reader he needs. For example: Time was when work did not enter into the subject-matter of fiction. The characters lived exclusively to make the story; and if they were not leisured folk, then they were working folk taken in their hours of leisure. But for a generation past, the novel, except as written by Henry James, has dealt with busy folk in their hours of busyness. Its characters, instead of existing to live the story that the novelist wants to tell, require him to write the story about them because they are really living. This one change in the make-up of fiction shows how our conception of pleasure has changed, from escape to voluntary self-immersion in the affairs of our fellows. And if this change could come about in our attitude toward the work about which the novelist writes, why can it not come about in our attitude toward the work which he himself does?

All art looks forward, consciously or unconsciously, to the breaking-down of the distinctions between work and play through the elevation of play to the worth and the usefulness of labour. While we work and play separately, the artist is bound to remain a person of inferior dignity; but he saves his self-respect by working tacitly for a public, hitherto almost undreamed-of save by a few, which shall live the whole, the integral, life—that is, which shall wholly and exhaustively live all the time, and in which everything that is suffered to exist at all shall be both desirable and indispensable, both play and work. In

that life of the future, blessedly free from the shallow distinctions between the things we do because we have to and those we do because we want to, the arts can really come into their inheritance. Perhaps this is only to say that there will never be any adequate appreciation of the fine art of telling tales until a great part of mankind has learned to make a fine art of living.

V

There is one corollary of taking fiction on such terms, as an incessant ministration to living reality, which for my part I find it not difficult to accept—the deadness at this moment of the once living works which we reprint and study and call "classics." To begin with, most of them were produced under a pretty shallow definition of pleasure; and they have therefore nothing to say to our higher ideal unless they far exceeded the utmost implications of their lower one. Only one thing could save fiction inspired by the older ideal: enough scope of vision in the artist to see the picture of our common human nature as it is for ever, whatever becomes of its momentary conditions. Shakspere, Fielding, Jane Austen—these, and very few others in English, live by their creation of something true that cannot change.

But the lesser folk who had not this vision—do they transmit to us any real message? The only other possible achievement is the timely record of movements, tendencies, beliefs, phases of civilization—facts, the

material of the lesser and lower realism. And the appeal of these is necessarily impermanent just in proportion as it is timely and intense. The least inspired realist, if he have conscience, patience, and clear eye-sight, can show us in one book more about our own decade than all the Maria Edgeworths and Harriet Martineaus and Charles Kingsleys in literature can teach us about it in all their books put together; and unless he have something of eternity in his pages, in another decade his work will be as dead as most of theirs.

And why should we not be glad to let him have his hour of life in his work? Recognizing or not recognizing its mortality, we can afford to be glad of whatever vitality it has in its own time, and consent to let posterity read for itself as we read for ourselves. By the same logic, why should we let antiquity read for us? A book is dead when it fails to speak fruitfully to us, either of things which are everlasting, or of things which are pressing and imperative parts of our lives now. I do not see why we should reject books which do the second thing merely on the ground that they will be meaningless to the future: that fact proves only the livingness of life. Neither do I see why we should go out of our ways to know and to preserve books merely because they meant something once. Either attitude implies a veneration for art as something apart from life—a disjunction the passing of which this book partly records and partly predicts.

Most novels treat, in one way or another, a single

constantly recurring situation: that of individual wealth or power in its relations with the rest of mankind. Underlying this theme, and every theme, is human nature. If in treating the theme the novelist can reveal true human nature as it has never been revealed before in a similar connection, he has done the greatest and the only permanent thing. If, failing to do that, he reveals an important phase of our present commercial civilization, he has done the next greatest. His novel is pretty certain of oblivion; but why should we pretend that it does not say more to us than some nineteenth-century novel that makes us laugh or cry, or sleep, over the fortunes of heroes and heroines whose concerns are none of ours, except through the vainest and most belittling kind of curiosity—the instinct of gossip, pure and simple?

Nothing could have a more sanifying effect on art than a ruthless sacrifice of whatever is superstitious in our veneration for the writings of the past. Meredith points, for the artist, the way to a noble disregard of all but living realities when he disclaims every thought, every desire, of immortality except on the score of service rendered: "... all right use of life, and the one secret of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us; as to my works, I know them faulty, think them of worth only when they point and aid to that end." Art is a living thing to him who makes it: unless it be so to the rest of us, have we really accepted it at all? And while the artist of the present is content to die as soon as his handiwork means nothing to us, is it not

strange that we should occupy ourselves with conferring a fictitious life upon dead artists of the past, and, as Professor Sir Walter Raleigh once said, pin bits of coloured ribbon on each other for having the intelligence to understand their works?

I end, because I can do no better, with this eloquent account [1] of the relation between writer and reader, by a novelist whose work was beginning just as Meredith's was ending; an account contained in an early Preface which, however often quoted of late, is not likely ever to become more familiar than it deserves:

"Sometimes, stretched at ease in the shade of a roadside tree, we watch the motions of a labourer in a distant field, and after a time, begin to wonder languidly as to what the fellow may be at. We watch the movements of his body, the waving of his arms, we see him bend down, stand up, hesitate, begin again. It may add to the charm of an idle hour to be told the purpose of his exertions. If we know he is trying to lift a stone, to dig a ditch, to uproot a stump, we look with a more real interest at his efforts; we are disposed to condone the jar of his agitation upon the restfulness of the landscape; and even, if in a brotherly frame of mind, we may bring ourselves to forgive his failure. We understood his object, and, after all, the fellow has tried, and perhaps he had not the strength—and perhaps he had not the knowledge. We forgive, go on our way—and forget.

[1] *The Nigger of the "Narcissus."* By Joseph Conrad. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1914. Preface, pp. xii–xiii.

"And so it is with the workman of art. Art is long and life is short, and success is very far off. And thus, doubtful of strength to travel so far, we talk a little about the aim—the aim of art, which, like life itself, is inspiring, difficult—obscured by mists. It is not in the clear logic of a triumphant conclusion; it is not in the unveiling of one of those heartless secrets which are called the Laws of Nature. It is not less great, but only more difficult.

"To arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and colour, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile—such is the aim, difficult and evanescent, and reserved only for a very few to achieve. But sometimes, by the deserving and the fortunate, even that task is accomplished. And when it is accomplished—behold!—all the truth of life is there: a moment of vision, a sigh, a smile—and the return to an eternal rest."

A BRIEF SELECTIVE AND SUGGESTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE NOVEL IN ENGLISH WITH HINTS FOR STUDY

A BRIEF SELECTIVE AND SUGGESTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY WITH HINTS FOR STUDY

It would be almost possible, with the aid of a great library, to fill the space of this reading- and reference-list with a bibliography of bibliographies. The purpose of the following pages is to represent, not cover, the subject; but material is supplied in excess of that reached by the ordinary student, and enough, I believe, if one were to follow it faithfully, to lead one to everything that bears importantly on the history of the novel in English.

To save space, I have kept pretty consistently within certain limitations. (1) I bear in mind primarily the student and the general reader, avoiding the mention of works or editions simply for their interest to bibliophile and collector. (2) I almost entirely ignore first editions, except of books published within twenty-five years; but dates of original publication of novels are supplied in brackets after the titles. (3) I name, usually, one good working library edition of an author's collected writings; a recent American edition, readily accessible and suitable to be either owned or merely used, whenever I am acquainted with one. (4) I name one comprehensive critical estimate of each more important author, making a few exceptions where there are different estimates which strikingly supplement each other, or which have independently great intrinsic interest. (5) I pay no attention to the short-story save where its history obviously crosses and affects that of the novel.

It has seemed advisable to omit the prices of books listed, because, in the conditions produced by the war, book prices hardly remain constant for even the period required to see a book through the press.

For convenience and coherence, I have arranged the list in groups based partly on chronology and partly on a sequence other than the chronological; that is, I have tried to suggest the development of certain types and modes of fiction, while preserving roughly the order of modern fictional history in general. The last division, XI., is of necessity a somewhat personal and therefore arbitrary selection; but it in no way interferes with the use of Divisions I.–X., as a disinterested and catholic representation of the subject.

Titles marked with a star (*) are listed in the useful and inexpensive Everyman's Library (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. General Editor, Ernest Rhys). The introductions to volumes of this series are invariably helpful in suggestions for reading, as well as in suggestions for critical appreciation.

I. General works of reference, to be consulted on several periods or phases of the history of fiction.

The Cambridge History of English Literature. Edited by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1907–17. 14 vols.

The History of Fiction. By John Colin Dunlop. Wilson's Edition. Bohn Library. 1896. 2 vols.

A History of the Novel Previous to the Seventeenth Century. By F. M. Warren. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1895.

English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth

Century. By Leslie Stephen. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1904.

The English Novel; a study in the development of personality. By Sidney Lanier. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1900.

A Study of Prose Fiction. By Bliss Perry. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1903.

The Development of the English Novel. By Wilbur L. Cross. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1899.

Masters of the English Novel. By Richard Burton. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1909.

British Novelists and Their Styles. By David Masson. Boston: Willard Small. 1889.

The English Novel. By Walter Raleigh. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1911. (Fifth edition.)

The English Novel. By George Saintsbury. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1913.

Two Centuries of the English Novel. By Harold Williams. London: Smith, Elder. 1911.

II. On the æsthetics and technique of fiction, see

The Art of Fiction. By Sir Walter Besant. Boston: Cupples, Upham & Co. This volume includes Henry James's rejoinder, of the same title (also in *Partial Portraits*). See, in the same connection, Stevenson's answer to Henry James (*A Humble Remonstrance,* in *Memories and Portraits*).

Materials and Methods of Fiction. By Clayton Hamilton. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1908.

Criticism and Fiction. By William Dean Howells. New York: Harper Bros. & Co. 1893. (A defense of realism. For the opposite view, containing a criticism of Howells and his school, see Ambrose Bierce's essay on *The Short Story,* in *The Opinionator,* Vol. 10 of the *Collected Works.* New York: Neale Publishing Co. 1909–12.)

Notes on Novelists. By Henry James. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1914.

The Novels and Tales of Henry James. New York Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1907–9. (The author's Prefaces.)

Creative Criticism. By J. E. Spingarn. New York: Henry Holt and Company. (Essays on the Unity of Genius and Taste.)

Standards. By W. C. Brownell. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1916.

III. For general bibliographical suggestions, see *The Cambridge History of English Literature,* Cross's *Development of the English Novel,* Perry's *Study of Prose Fiction,* Wilson's Edition of Dunlop, and *A Descriptive Guide to the Best Fiction in English,* by Ernest A. Baker (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1913. New Edition, enlarged and thoroughly revised. This is the most useful critical and descriptive bibliography of fiction in English from the mediæval romances to 1911). There is an exhaustive bibliography of the novel of manners from 1600 to 1740 in *The Rise of the Novel of Manners,* by Charlotte Elizabeth Morgan (New York: Columbia University Press. 1911). See also the catalogues of fiction published by the

public libraries of Chicago, Boston, Cincinnati, and St. Louis; and *Books That Count; a dictionary of Standard Books* (Edited by W. Forbes Gray. London: Adam and Charles Black. 1912. Columns 241–92).

IV. Pre-Elizabethan forms of prose fiction: the Greek romances and the romances of Chivalry.

Greek Romances. Translated by Rowland Smith. Bohn's Library. (Translations from Heliodorus, Tatius, and Longus.) See also Warren and Dunlop.

The Flourishing of Romance and the Age of Allegory. By George Saintsbury. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1897. See also Warren, Dunlop, and *The Cambridge History.*

V. The Elizabethan period: the novella and the novel.

The Greek Romances in Elizabethan Prose Fiction. By Samuel Lee Wolff. Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Press of the New Era Printing Co. 1912.

The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare. By J. J. Jusserand. London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1894. See also *The Cambridge History.*

The following will serve to represent the Elizabethan practice of fiction:

The Palace of Pleasure. By William Painter. [1566–7]. London: D. Nutt. 1890.

The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia. By Sir Philip Sidney. [1590]. Vols. 1–2 of *Works,* London, 1725, 3 vols. Also, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1907. (Edited by E. A. Baker,

with the additions of Sir William Alexander and Richard Beling, a life, and an introduction.)

Euphues [1579] and *Euphues and His England* [1580]. By John Lyly. Vols. 1 and 2 of *Works*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1902. 3 vols.

Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie, found after his death in his cell at Silexedra. By Thomas Lodge. [1590]. London: Chatto & Windus. 1900. (Edited by W. W. Greg.)

The Unfortunate Traveller; or, the Life of Jack Wilton. By Thomas Nash. [1594]. London: Chiswick Press. 1892. Edited, with an essay on the Life and Writings of Thomas Nash, by Edmund Gosse.

VI. The Seventeenth Century; rise of the novel of manners; precursors of realism.

Illustrations of the "heroic" romances:

Parthenissa; that most fam'd romance. By Roger Boyle, First Earl of Orrery. First part, in 6 vols., 1654; complete edition in 3 vols., 1655.

Aretina; or, the Serious Romance. By Sir George Mackenzie. London: 1661.

Pandion and Iphigenia; or, the Story of the Coy Lady of Thessalia. By John Crowne. London: 1665.

All of these are imitations of the imported (French) romances of La Calprenède and the Scudérys. For an excellent brief account of the whole school, see Raleigh's Chapter IV. Note that *The Female Quixote; or the Adventures of Arabella* (by Mrs. Char-

lotte Lennox. Originally published 1752. London: F. C. & J. Rivington, 1820), a belated satire on this school, shows how long its influence refused to yield to the realistic reaction. The romances themselves are out of print and not commonly accessible.

Allegorical realism:

**Pilgrim's Progress.* By John Bunyan [1678]. Oxford. 1879. Clarendon Press Series.

The Life and Death of Mr. Badman. By John Bunyan. [1680]. London: W. Heinemann. 1900.

Essay on Bunyan in the Sixth Series of *Shelburne Essays.* By Paul Elmer More. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1904–10. 6 vols. For the historical background of this tradition, see Saintsbury's *Flourishing of Romance and the Age of Allegory.*

Social realism; novels of scandal, etc.:

Plays, Histories, and Novels. By Mrs. Aphra Behn. [1698]. London. 1871. 6 vols. Vol. 5 contains the best of the novels, including *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave* and *The Fair Jilt.*

Incognita. By William Congreve. London. [1692]. Note especially Congreve's anti-romanticistic Preface. Out of print since 1713. For an account, see Raleigh's Chapter IV.

Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of Both Sexes. From the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean. By Mrs. Mary de la Riviere Manley. London. 1709. 2 vols. Out of print.

Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to Utopia. By Mrs. Eliza Haywood. London. [1725]. Note that Mrs. Haywood partly relapsed into the romantic-lackadaisical tradition in *Idalia; or, The Unfortunate Mistress* (London. 1725) and *Philidore and Placentia; or, L'Amour trop Delicat* (London. 1727). All of these are out of print.

Note the development of the "character" in the hands of Addison and Steele (Roger de Coverley series of the **Spectator Papers*). For a summary of the seventeenth-century writers of "characters," including Overbury and Samuel Butler, see Raleigh, pp. 113–14.

Pseudo-realistic satire, *voyage imaginaire,* Utopian romance, etc.

**Travels into several remote Nations of the World, by Lemuel Gulliver.* By Jonathan Swift. [1726]. (*Gulliver's Travels and Other Works,* exactly reprinted from the first edition, and edited, with some account of Cyrano de Bergerac and his voyages to the sun and moon, by H. Morley. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1906.) A modern edition of Swift is *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift.* London: G. Bell & Sons. 1907–8. Of this edition, *Gulliver* is Vol. 8.

For estimates of Swift, see *Swift,* by Leslie Stephen (New York. 1882. English Men of Letters) and *Essays about Men, Women, and Books,* by Augustine Birrell (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons).

The Consolidator; or, Memoirs of Sundry Transactions from the World in the Moon. By Daniel Defoe. [1705]. This and *Gulliver*

show the eighteenth-century status of a form the lineage of which includes Lucian, *The Ultimate Things Beyond Thule* of Antonius Diogenes (see Warren), More's *Utopia* [1516], and the romances of Cyrano de Bergerac and of Voltaire. The form is perpetuated, with modifications, in Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* [1871], Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* and *Erewhon Revisited Twenty Years Later* (Posthumous. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1910. Prefaces 1901), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* 2000–1887 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888), and several of the earlier mechanistic romances of H. G. Wells, as *The War of the Worlds* ([1898]. New York: Harper Bros.), *When the Sleeper Wakes* ([1899]. New York: Harper Bros.), and *In the Days of the Comet* ([1906]. New York: The Century Co.).

Such Oriental romances as **Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* [1759] and *The History of the Caliph Vathek: an Arabian Tale from an unpublished MS.* [French version, 1782] are also, in part, *voyages imaginaires* without the primarily satiric purpose. A more fanciful work in the same tradition is Paltock's **Peter Wilkins.* (*Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.* By Samuel Johnson. Edited by G. Birkbeck Hill. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1887. *Vathek, an Arabian Tale.* By William Beckford. London: Routledge, 1912. *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins.* By Robert Paltock? [1751]. London: Reeves & Turner. 1884.

This is a facsimile reprint of the first edition in 2 vols., edited by A. H. Bullen.)

The picaresque novel; Defoe.

**Captain Singleton* [1720], *Colonel Jacques* [1722], **Memoirs of a Cavalier* [1720], *Duncan Campbell,* etc. In *The Works of Daniel Defoe,* edited by G. H. Maynadier. Boston: Old Corner Bookstore. 16 vols.

For the ancestry of this type, see Warren's account of the Spanish picaresque romance (of which Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is a parody); also the account of Nash's *Jack Wilton* in Gosse's Introduction. The one definite Spanish prototype of the rogue-novel is now accessible in English: *Lazarillo de Tormes.* Tr. by Louis How. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. 1917.

Later developments of the picaresque novel are exemplified by Fielding's *History of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* [1743], Smollett's *Roderick Random* [1748] and *Peregrine Pickle* [1751], and Thackeray's *Luck of Barry Lyndon* [1844]. Dickens's **Oliver Twist* [1838] owes something to the same tradition; as also, in another way, does Stevenson's **Treasure Island* [1883].

The student should consult *Romances of Roguery,* by Frank Chandler Wadleigh. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1899.

The biographical novel; Defoe.

**The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.* By Daniel Defoe [1719]. (For edition, see above.) Also, certain of the picaresque novels

of Defoe are biographic in form; notably, *Memoirs of a Cavalier* and *Duncan Campbell.* This development leads straight to the most characteristic novels of the great school of eighteenth-century realism (e. g., **Tom Jones*) and of the Victorian period (e. g., **David Copperfield* and **Pendennis*). To a certain slight extent, Aphra Behn is Defoe's predecessor in the biographical novel.

On Defoe, see *Daniel Defoe,* by William Minto. (New York: 1879. English Men of Letters); also, the essay on Defoe in Vol. 1 of *Hours in a Library,* by Leslie Stephen. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1894. 4 vols.)

For a general account of the novel of manners in this period, and an exhaustive bibliography, consult Miss Morgan's *The Rise of the Novel of Manners. The Cambridge History* is notably helpful on the seventeenth century.

VII. The realists from Richardson to Jane Austen.

Samuel Richardson.

**Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* [1740]. *Clarissa Harlowe; or, The History of a Young Lady* [1748]. *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* [1753]. By Samuel Richardson. In Richardson's *Works.* London: Chapman & Hall. 20 vols. 1902.

Samuel Richardson. By Austin Dobson. New York. 1902. (English Men of Letters.) Also, essays on Richardson in *Letters on Literature,* by Andrew Lang (London: Longmans,

1889); *Res Judicatae*, by Augustine Birrell (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1897); and Vol. 1 of Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*.

Henry Fielding.

**The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* [1742]. **The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* [1749]. *Amelia* [1751]. (For *Jonathan Wild*, see VI., under the picaresque novel, above.) In *The Works of Henry Fielding*. Edited, with a biographical essay by Leslie Stephen. London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1882. 10 vols. American edition: Edited by G. H. Maynadier. New York: Athenaeum Society. 1903. 12 vols.

Fielding. By Austin Dobson. New York. 1883. (English Men of Letters). Essays in Andrew Lang's *Letters on Literature* and Vol. 2 of Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*.

Tobias George Smollett.

Roderick Random [1748]. *Peregrine Pickle* [1751]. *Ferdinand, Count Fathom* [1753]. *Sir Lancelot Greaves* [1762]. *Humphrey Clinker* [1771]. In *The Works of Tobias George Smollett*, edited with introduction by G. H. Maynadier. Boston: Old Corner Bookstore. 1902. 12 vols. For *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*, see the picaresque novel, under VI, above. *Ferdinand, Count Fathom* is an inferior example of much the same type. *Sir Lancelot Greaves* is in the mode of Cervantes; it should be noted that Smollett did, with evident gusto, a translation of *Don Quixote*. Note in *Humphrey*

Clinker the occurrence of the letter-form as practised by Richardson. This alone of Smollett's novels is realistic in both form and substance.

Life of Tobias George Smollett. By David Hannay. London: Walter Scott. 1887. (Great Writers Series.)

Laurence Sterne.

**The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* [1759–67]. *A Sentimental Journey* [1768]. In *The Complete Works of Laurence Sterne.* With an introduction by W. L. Cross. New York: The Colonial Society. 1904. 6 vols. This edition includes the *Life* by Percy Fitzgerald, which see.

Sterne. By H. D. Traill. New York. 1882. (English Men of Letters.) *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne.* By Wilbur L. Cross. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1909. Essays in Augustine Birrell's *Men, Women, and Books;* Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library,* Vol. 3; and *Shelburne Essays,* Third Series, by Paul Elmer More. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1904–10.)

Oliver Goldsmith.

**The Vicar of Wakefield* [1766]. Vol. 2 of *The Works of Oliver Goldsmith.* Edited by Peter Cunningham, and including Forster's *Life.* Boston: The Jefferson Press. 1900. 12 vols.

Frances Burney (Mme. D'Arblay).

**Evelina* [1778] and *Cecilia* [1782]. In Bohn's Novelist Library. London. 1883 and

1882. Each, 2 vols. *Cecilia.* New York: The Macmillan Co. 1904.

Fanny Burney. By Austin Dobson, New York: The Macmillan Co. 1903. (English Men of Letters). Essay in More's *Shelburne Essays,* Fourth Series.

Maria Edgeworth.

**Castle Rackrent* [1800] and **The Absentee* [1801]. Both in No. 410 of Everyman's Library. (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.) *Belinda* [1801]. *Leonora* [1806]. *Helen* [1834]. In the Longford Edition of her *Works.* London. 1893. 10 vols.

Maria Edgeworth. By Emily Lawless. London: The Macmillan Co. 1903. (English Men of Letters). For Miss Edgeworth's influence on Scott, see Brander Matthews' introduction to *Castle Rackrent* and *The Absentee* in Everyman's Library.

Jane Austen.

**Pride and Prejudice* [1813]. **Sense and Sensibility* [1811]. * *Northanger Abbey* [1818]. **Mansfield Park* [1814]. **Persuasion* [1818]. **Emma* [1816]. In *The Works of Jane Austen.* London: Chatto & Windus. 1908. 10 vols.

Life of Jane Austen. By Goldwin Smith. London: 1890. (Great Writers Series.)

On the period as a whole, see, besides Cross, Raleigh, Saintsbury's *English Novel,* and *The Cambridge History, A History of Eighteenth Century Literature,* by Edmund Gosse (London. 1889); and *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century,* by Leslie Stephen (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1904).

Thackeray's Lectures on **The English Humorists* (Vol. 5 of *Works;* see X., below) treats the humorous realists from Congreve to Sterne.

VIII. Gothic and Oriental romances; the School of Terror, etc.

**The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins.* By Robert Paltock [1751]. London: Reeves & Turner. 1884.

The Castle of Otranto. By Horace Walpole [1764]. London. 1892. In Cassell's National Library. Essay on Walpole in Vol. 1 of Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library.*

The Old English Baron. By Clara Reeve [1777]. *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Old English Baron* have been reprinted together by Warne, 1872, and by Nimmo, 1883, and separately in Cassell's National Library.

The Mysteries of Udolpho. By Anne Radcliffe [1794]. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1903. *The Romance of the Forest.* By the same. [1791]. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1904. *A Sicilian Romance* [1709] and *The Italian; or, the Confessional of the Black Penitent* [1797], the latter perhaps the best of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, are out of print.

The Monk; a Romance. By Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis. Also entitled *Ambrosio; or, The Monk.* [1795]. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1907.

Caleb Williams; or, Things as They Are. By William Godwin. [1795]. London: Routledge, 1904. *St. Leon* [1799] and *Fleetwood* [1805] are out of print. See essay on Godwin's Novels

in Leslie Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer* (London: Duckworth & Co. 4 vols. 1899–1902).

Melmoth the Wanderer [1820]. By Charles Robert Maturin. London: Richard Bentley & Son. 1892. 3 vols. This edition contains a memoir and a valuable bibliography of Maturin's works.

**Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* [1818]. By Mary Wollstonecraft (Godwin) Shelley. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. No. 616 of Everyman's Library. *Tales and Stories.* By Mary Wollstonecraft (Godwin) Shelley. London. 1891. Introduction by Richard Garnett. (Treasure house of tales by great authors.)

Crotchet Castle [1831]. By Thomas Love Peacock. London: J. M. Dent & Co. 1891. Edited by Richard Garnett. In the same edition, *Gryll Grange* [1860], 1891, 2 vols.; **Headlong Hall* [1816], 1892; *Maid Marian* [1822], 1892; *Melincourt* [1817], 1891; **Nightmare Abbey* [1817], 1892; and *The Misfortunes of Elphin* [1829], 1891.

Essay on Peacock in *Essays in English Literature,* by George Saintsbury. (London: Percival & Co. 1891.)

Klosterheim [1832]. *The Avenger* [1838]. *The Spanish Military Nun.* By Thomas De Quincey. In Vols. 12–13 of *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey.* Edited by David Masson. London: A. & C. Black. 1896–97.

For Johnson's *Rasselas* and Beckford's *Vathek,*

see the Utopian romance, etc., under VI. above; also *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century,* by Martha Pike Conant.

Note the influence of the School of Terror on the historical romances of Harrison Ainsworth (see IX. below); also on the Christmas stories of Dickens (for whom, see X. below) and on Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (see X. below).

**Tales of Mystery,* etc. [1839–]. By Edgar Allan Poe. Vols. 1–5 of *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe,* edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman and George Edward Woodberry. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1894–5. 10 vols. For memoir and introduction, see Vol. 1.

**The House of the Seven Gables* [1851]. **The Scarlet Letter* [1850]. **The Marble Faun* [1860]. *Septimius Felton* [1872]. *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret* [1883]. By Nathaniel Hawthorne. Vols. 3, 5–6, 11, 13 of the Standard Library Edition of *The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1882–96. *Hawthorne.* By Henry James. New York. 1879. (English Men of Letters). *Nathaniel Hawthorne.* By George E. Woodberry. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1902 (American Men of Letters.)

For the literary ancestry of Poe and Hawthorne, see the First Series of *Shelburne Essays,* by Paul Elmer More, essay on *The Origins of Hawthorne and Poe.* Two excellent modern estimates, in comparison and contrast of the two writers, are the essays in *American Prose*

Masters, by W. C. Brownell. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1909.)

Note the conversion of the novel of terror into the modern pseudo-realistic novel of mystery and suspense in the stories of Wilkie Collins (in New Edition. London: Chatto & Windus. *After Dark* [1856], 1891; *The Haunted Hotel,* 1892; **The Woman in White* [1860], 1896; *Armadale* [1866], 1897; *The Moonstone* [1868], 1897; *No Name* [1862], 1898; etc.); also in those of A. Conan Doyle (e. g., *The Hound of the Baskervilles* [1902]. New York: McClure, 1902. *A Study in Scarlet* [1887], and *The Sign of the Four* [1889]. New York: Harper Bros. & Co., 1904). See also, among mid-nineteenth century experiments in the psychic, Bulwer's *Zanoni* [1842] and *A Strange Story* [1862] (for edition, see X. below). The complete assimilation of the element of terror, mystery, and supernaturalism into the modern realistic mode occurs in Henry James's *Turn of the Screw* and some of Rudyard Kipling's stories, as *The End of the Passage* and *The Mark of the Beast.*

For a general treatment and valuable bibliographical suggestions, consult *The Supernatural in English Fiction,* by Dorothy Scarborough (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1917).

IX. Historical novels and romances.

Queenhoo-Hall; a romance. By Joseph Strutt. Edinburgh. [1808]. Finished and edited by Sir Walter Scott. Out of print.

**The Waverley Novels.* New York: Harper &

Bros. 30 vols. **Waverley* [1814] (Vol. 1–2); **Rob Roy* [1817] (Vol. 5); **A Legend of Montrose* [1819] (Vol. 6); **The Bride of Lammermoor* [1819] (Vol. 10); **Ivanhoe* [1819] (Vol. 11); **Kenilworth* [1821] (Vol. 14); etc.

Sir Walter Scott. By R. H. Hutton. New York. 1879. (English Men of Letters). For detailed study, see *A Key to the Waverley Novels in chronological sequence, with index of characters,* by Henry Grey. (New edition. London, 1899). Essay, *Scotch Novels and Scotch History,* in the Third Series of Paul Elmer More's *Shelburne Essays.*

Bulwer's Works. **Harold, the Last of the Saxon Kings* [1848]. **The Last Days of Pompeii* [1834]. **The Last of the Barons* [1843]. **Rienzi, the Last of the Roman Tribunes* [1835]. *Leila* [1838]. *Devereux* [1829]. By Edward Bulwer-Lytton. (See also under VIII. and X.).

Historical Romances of Harrison Ainsworth. Victorian Edition. Philadelphia: George Barrie & Son. 20 vols. Especially, *Jack Sheppard* [1839] (Vol. 2); *Windsor Castle* [1843] (Vol. 10); and **The Tower of London* [1840] (Vols. 14–15). See VIII. above.

**Henry Esmond* [1852]. **The Virginians* [1858–9]. *Denis Duval* (unfinished) [1867]. Vols. 3, 10, and 13 of Biographical Edition (see X.).

**The Cloister and the Hearth.* By Charles Reade. [1861]. Vols. 1–2 of *Works.* (See X.).

**Romola.* By George Eliot [1863]. In *Works* (see X.). See Chapter IX of Leslie Stephen's

George Eliot. (New York: The Macmillan Co. 1902. English Men of Letters.)

**Westward Ho!* [1855]. **Hypatia* [1853]. **Hereward the Wake* [1866]. By Charles Kingsley. Vols. 1–2, 9–10, and 11–12 of *The Life and Works of Charles Kingsley.* (New York: The Macmillan Co. 1901–03. 19 vols.) See X. below.

Essays in Vol. 3 of Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library,* and *Studies in Early Victorian Literature,* by Frederic Harrison. (London: Edward Arnold. 1906.)

**Kidnapped* [1886] and *David Balfour* [sequel, 1892]. *The Black Arrow* [1888]. *St. Ives* [1892]. *The Weir of Hermiston* [1896]. Vols. 3, 8, 4, 11, and 10, respectively, of *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson,* Biographical Edition. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1906. 25 vols.)

Essay on Stevenson in Vol. 4 of Leslie Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer.* See also Stevenson's *Gossip on Romance,* in *Memories and Portraits.*

Stevenson's attempt to re-create the historical romance of Scott marks the end of a tradition. In the hands of his successors, who may be represented by Anthony Hope Hawkins (*The Prisoner of Zenda*), Sir Gilbert Parker (*Seats of the Mighty*), Justin Huntly McCarthy, Stanley Weyman, Francis Marion Crawford, Maurice Hewlett, Mary Johnston, and Winston Churchill, the historical romance tends to become sentimental melodrama. More nearly in

the vein of Scott is *The White Company,* by A. Conan Doyle [1891]. (London: Smith, Elder. 1891.)

The most successful part of Stevenson's influence appears to have been exerted through **Treasure Island* (Vol. 1) rather than through the primarily historical romances. The most Stevensonian of writers after Stevenson is Sir Arthur T. Quiller-Couch (note his skilfully written concluding chapters of Stevenson's unfinished *St. Ives*). See *Early Novels and Stories by "Q."* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Uniform Edition, 9 vols.

Marius the Epicurean. By Walter Horatio Pater. London: Macmillan & Co. 1892. 2 vols.

The Valley of Decision. By Edith Wharton. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1902. 2 vols. (Fifth and subsequent impressions in one vol.)

Veranilda. By George Gissing. London: Constable & Co., 1903. (Posthumous; unfinished.)

For a very thorough and painstaking bibliography of the whole cycle of historical fiction to the present time, see *A Guide to Historical Fiction,* by Ernest A. Baker. (New York: The Macmillan Co. 1914.)

X. Victorian realism and pseudo-realism.

A. The novelists of manners, etc.

Charles Dickens.

Works, Biographical Edition, with introductions by Arthur Waugh. (London: Chapman

& Hall. 20 vols.) *Works,* illustrated edition. (New York: The Macmillan Co. 20 vols.)

**The Pickwick Papers* [1837]. **Nicholas Nickleby* [1839]. **Martin Chuzzlewit* [1844]. **Dombey and Son* [1848]. **David Copperfield* [1850]. **Bleak House* [1853]. **Hard Times* [1854]. **Little Dorrit* [1857]. **Great Expectations* [1859]. **Our Mutual Friend* [1865]. **The Mystery of Edwin Drood* [posthumous, 1870].

Note that **A Tale of Two Cities* [1859] and **Barnaby Rudge* [1840–1] are classifiable under the historical novel (IX.).

Charles Dickens; a critical study. By G. K. Chesterton. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1906. *Charles Dickens; a critical study.* By George Gissing. London: Blackie. Essays in *Corrected Impressions,* by George Saintsbury (London: W. Heinemann. 1895), Frederic Harrison's *Studies in Early Victorian Literature,* and the Fifth Series of More's *Shelburne Essays.*

The Brontës.

**Jane Eyre* [1847]. **The Professor* [1857]. **Shirley* [1849]. **Villette* [1853]. By Charlotte Brontë. **The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* [1848] By Anne Brontë. **Wuthering Heights* [1847]. By Emily Brontë (see also VIII, above). In *The Life and Works of the Sisters Brontë.* New York: Harper & Bros. 1899–1900. 7 vols. This edition includes Mrs. Gaskell's **Life of Charlotte Brontë,* which see.

An edition of *Wuthering Heights* published by Doubleday, Page & Co. (New York. 1907) contains a bibliography of the Brontës.

Essays in George Saintsbury's *Corrected Impressions,* Frederic Harrison's *Studies in Early Victorian Literature,* and Vol. 3 of Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library.*

William Makepeace Thackeray.

Works, Biographical Edition. New York: Harper & Bros. 1898–1903. 13 vols. See IX. above; and, for *Barry Lyndon,* VI. **Vanity Fair* [1847–8]. **Pendennis* [1849–50]. **The Newcomes* [1854–5].

Vol. 13 contains the *Life* by Leslie Stephen, and a bibliography. See also the *Life* by Anthony Trollope. (New York: 1879. English Men of Letters.)

Essays in Saintsbury's *Corrected Impressions,* Harrison's *Studies in Early Victorian Literature,* and *Victorian Prose Masters,* by W. C. Brownell. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1915.)

Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

The Caxtons [1849]. *"My Novel," by Pisistratus Caxton; or, Varieties in English Life* [1853]. *What Will He Do With It?* [1858]. *Kenelm Chillingly* [1873]. In *Bulwer's Works.* London: George Routledge & Sons.

See also VIII. and IX. above.

Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield.

Vivian Grey [1826]. *Contarini Fleming* [1832]. *Lothair* [1870]. *Endymion* [1880].

In *The Novels and Tales of Benjamin Disraeli.* London. 1900. 11 vols.

See also B. below.

Essays in Harrison's *Studies in Early Victorian Literature* and Vol. 2 of Stephen's *Hours in a Library.*

Mrs. Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell.

Works, with introductions by A. W. Ward. London: Smith, Elder & Co.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1906–11. 8 vols. **Cranford* [1853]; *Ruth* [1853]; **Sylvia's Lovers* [1863].

See also B. below.

Essay in the Fifth Series of More's *Shelburne Essays.*

Charles Reade.

Works. Boston: Dana Estes. 18 vols. *Hard Cash* [1863]. *Griffith Gaunt* [1866]. *A Terrible Temptation* [1871]. *Foul Play* [1869].

Perhaps more common is the "Copyright Edition," Collection of British Authors (Leipzig: Tauchnitz).

See, for *The Cloister and the Hearth,* IX. above.

George Eliot (Marian Evans Cross).

Works, Standard Edition, 21 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. **Adam Bede* [1859]. **The Mill on the Floss* [1860]; *Middlemarch* [1871–2]. **Silas Marner* [1861]. *Daniel Deronda* [1876]. For *Romola,* see IX. above; for *Felix Holt the Radical,* B. below.

George Eliot. By Leslie Stephen. New

York: The Macmillan Co. 1902. (English Men of Letters.) Essays in Saintsbury's *Corrected Impressions;* Harrison's *Studies in Early Victorian Literature;* Vol. 3 of Stephen's *Hours in a Library;* and Brownell's *Victorian Prose Masters.*

Anthony Trollope.

*The Barchester Novels, in order: **The Warden* [1855]; **Barchester Towers* [1857]; **Doctor Thorne* [1858]; **Framley Parsonage* [1861]; **The Small House at Allington* [1864]; **The Last Chronicle of Barset* [1867].

Other works, Parliamentary novels, etc.: *Can You Forgive Her?* [1864–5]; *Phineas Finn, the Irish Member* [1866]; *Phineas Redux* [1874]; *The Eustace Diamonds* [1872]; *The Way We Live Now* [1875].

These are now most commonly seen in the "Copyright Edition," Collection of British Authors (Leipzig: Tauchnitz). Also, several of the Parliamentary and Manor House novels are published by Dodd, Mead and Co., New York, 1910–.

See also Trollope's *Autobiography* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1910.) Essays in Saintsbury's *Corrected Impressions* and Harrison's *Studies in Early Victorian Literature.*

Margaret Oliphant Oliphant.

Passages in the Life of Mistress Margaret Maitland [1849]. *Lilliesleaf* [sequel, 1856]. Both published by Ward and Locke, London. **Salem Chapel* [1863]. *The Rector* [1863]; *The Doc-*

tor's Family [1863]; and *The Perpetual Curate* [1864]. Published in 1 vol., Blackwood, London. *Miss Marjoribanks* [1866]. London: Blackwood. *Phoebe, Junior: the Last Chronicle of Carlingford* [1876]. London: Hurst and Blackett.

Published, under the collective title "Chronicles of Carlingford," in the "Copyright Edition," Collection of British Authors (Leipzig: Tauchnitz).

George Meredith.

Works of George Meredith, Memorial Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1909–12. 29 vols. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* [1859], 2; *Sandra Belloni* [1864] (originally, *Emilia in England*), 3–4; *Rhoda Fleming* [1865], 5; *Evan Harrington* [1861], 6; *Vittoria* [1866] (sequel to *Sandra Belloni*), 7–8; *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* [1871], 9–10; *Beauchamp's Career* [1876], 11–12; *The Egoist* [1879], 13–14; *The Tragic Comedians* [1880], 15; *Diana of the Crossways* [1885], 16; *One of Our Conquerors* [1891], 17; *Lord Ormont and His Aminta* [1894], 18; *The Amazing Marriage* [1895], 19; *The House on the Beach* [1895], 22.

George Meredith; his life and art. By J. A. Hammerton. New and revised edition. Edinburgh, 1911. Essays in the Second Series of More's *Shelburne Essays* and Brownell's *Victorian Prose Masters.* See also Meredith's *Essay on the Idea of Comedy and of the Uses of the Comic Spirit,* Vol. 23.

William Black.

The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton [1872]. London: Macmillan & Co. 1878. *Madcap Violet* [1877]. London: Macmillan & Co. 1880. *White Wings; a yachting romance* [1880]. London: Macmillan & Co. 1882. *Shandon Bells* [1883]. New York: A. L. Burt (The Manhattan Library).

Henry James.

Novels and Tales, New York Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1907–09. 24 vols. *Roderick Hudson* [1875], 1; *The American* [1877], 2; *Portrait of a Lady* [1881], 3–4; *The Tragic Muse* [1891], 7–8; *The Awkward Age* [1899], 9; *What Maisie Knew* [1897], 11; *The Ambassadors* [1903], 21–22; *The Wings of the Dove* [1902], 19–20; *The Golden Bowl* [1905], 23–24.

Uncollected: *The Sacred Fount.* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1901.) *The Sense of the Past* and *The Ivory Tower* (both posthumous. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1917).

See also, in the New York Edition, the following modern *novelle,* illustrating the expansion of the short-story into a modification of the novel: *Daisy Miller* [1878], 18; *A London Life* [1888], 10; *The Spoils of Poynton* [1897], 10; *The Aspern Papers* [1888], 12; *The Turn of the Screw* [1898] (see also under VIII.), 12; *The Author of Beltraffio* [1885], 16; and *The Altar of the Dead* [1895], 17.

Henry James. By Ford Madox Hueffer. London: Martin Secker. 1913. *Henry James.* By Rebecca West. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1916 (Writers of the Day). Essay in Brownell's *American Prose Masters.*

See, above all, the author's prefaces to the volumes of the New York Edition.

William Dean Howells.

Their Wedding Journey [1871]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. *Their Silver Wedding Journey* [1899, sequel]. New York: Harper Bros. *A Foregone Conclusion* [1875]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. *The Lady of the "Aroostook"* [1878]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. *The Undiscovered Country* [1880]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. *Doctor Breen's Practice* [1881]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. *A Modern Instance* [1883]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. *The Rise of Silas Lapham* [1885]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. *The Minister's Charge; or, the Apprenticeship of Lemuel Barker* [1887]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. *Annie Kilburn* [1888]. New York: Harper Bros. *The Quality of Mercy* [1892]. New York: Harper Bros. *A Traveller from Altruria* [1894]. New York: Harper Bros. *The Story of a Play* [1898]. New York: Harper Bros. *The Kentons* [1902]. New York: Harper Bros. *The Son of Royal Langbrith* [1904]. New York: Harper Bros. *Fennel and Rue* [1908]. New York: Harper Bros. *The*

Leatherwood God [1916]. New York: The Century Co.

William Dean Howells. By Alexander Harvey. New York: B. W. Huebsch. 1917. See also *My Literary Passions* (by W. D. Howells. New York: Harper & Bros. 1895) and *Literature and Life* (by the same. New York: Harper & Bros. 1902).

An interesting twentieth-century reversion to the form and spirit of the Early Victorian novel is the fiction of William De Morgan: *Joseph Vance; Alice-For-Short; It Never Can Happen Again; Somehow Good; A Likely Story; When Ghost Meets Ghost.* New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1906–14. Note that De Morgan's choice of a technique was quite deliberate: his fifth novel, *An Affair of Dishonor* (New York: Holt. 1911), is a strictly modern piece of naturalism.

B. Novelists of Protests; social satirists.

Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield.

**Coningsby; or, The New Generation* [1844]. *Sybil; or, The Two Nations* [1845]. *Tancred; or, The New Crusade* [1844]. Vols. 7–9 of *Novels and Tales.* See A. above.

Mrs. Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell.

**Mary Barton* [1848]. **North and South* [1855]. Vols. 1 and 4 of *Works.* See A. above.

Charles Kingsley.

**Alton Locke the Tailor* [1850]. **Yeast*

[1851]. Vols. 7–8 and 15 of *Life and Works.* See IX. above.

Sir Walter Besant.

Children of Gibeon [1886]. *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* [1882]. New York: Harper & Bros. 1902.

George Gissing.

Demos; a story of English Socialism [1886]. London: Smith, Elder & Co. *Thyrza* [1887]. London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1907. *In the Year of Jubilee* [1894]. New York: Appleton. *The New Grub Street* [1891]. London: Smith, Elder. *Will Warburton.* London: A. Constable & Co. 1905. *The Whirlpool* [1897]. New York: Stokes. *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* [1903]. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1903 (also No. 46 of Boni & Liveright's Modern Library, New York, with introduction by Paul Elmer More). *The Odd Women* [1893]. New York: Macmillan.

George Gissing. By Frank Swinnerton. London: Martin Secker. *The Private Life of Henry Maitland; a record dictated by J. H.* Revised and edited by Morley Roberts. New York: George H. Doran Co. 1912. (A thinly disguised biography of Gissing, with a liberal admixture of criticism.)

Essay in the Fifth Series of More's *Shelburne Essays.*

See also IX. above.

Note that Reade's *It Is Never Too Late to Mend* and *Put Yourself in His Place,* Dickens's *Hard*

Times, and George Eliot's **Felix Holt the Radical* (see A. above) turn partly on economic conditions and struggles of class. Reade's *Hard Cash* and *Foul Play,* and many of Dickens's novels, as *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Oliver Twist,* contain strong elements of protest against particular isolated abuses.

George Bernard Shaw.

Love Among the Artists [1889]. *The Irrational Knot* [1905]. *An Unsocial Socialist* [1887]. *Cashell Byron's Profession* [1886]. Written 1880–. New York: Brentano's. 1909–10.

Samuel Butler.

The Way of All Flesh. Written 1872–84. Published 1903 (posthumous). New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1913. Also No. 13 of Boni & Liveright's Modern Library, New York. See also VI. above.

A great deal of the most characteristic social realism of 1903–18 shows markedly the influence of Butler—notably, the work of Gilbert Cannan, J. D. Beresford, Compton Mackenzie, W. L. George, Elinor Mordaunt, W. B. Maxwell, and St. John G. Ervine.

C. Novelists of Local Colour, etc.

James Fenimore Cooper (the American Indian, etc.).

Collected Writings, Iroquois Edition New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1906. *The Leatherstocking Tales,* Vols. 5, 11, 18, 20, 21. (**The Deerslayer* [1841]; **The Last of the*

Mohicans [1826]; **The Pathfinder* [1840]; **The Pioneers* [1823]; **The Prairie* [1826].) *The Bravo,* 2; *The Pilot,* 19; *The Spy,* 27.

Cooper shows the influence of Scott, who in turn shows that of Maria Edgeworth. See VII. above.

Essay on Cooper in Brownell's *American Prose Masters.* See also Howells's *My Literary Passions.*

Samuel Lover (Ireland and the Irish).

**Handy Andy* [1842–3]. New York: The Athenæum Society. 2 vols. (Copyright, 1901, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.)

Suggestions for reading and study of Irish local colour may be found in *Irish Life in Irish Fiction,* by Horatio Sheafe Krans (New York: The Macmillan Co. 1903).

Charles Lever (Irish life; military life).

Military Novels (*Charles O'Malley* [1841], etc.). New York Athenæum Society. 7 vols. *Novels of Adventure* (**Harry Lorrequer* [1839–40], etc.). New York: Athenæum Society. 5 vols.

Frederick Marryatt (Sailors and the sea; the Royal Navy).

**Masterman Ready* [1841]. **Jacob Faithful* [1834]. *The Phantom Ship* [1839]. **The King's Own* [1830]. **Mr. Midshipman Easy* [1836]. **Peter Simple* [1834]. In *The Novels of Capt. Marryatt.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

Note that the beginning of this tradition in

the novel is in Smollett's *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* (see VII. above).

George Borrow (Gipsies; Vagabondia; Wales).

**Lavengro* [1851]. **The Romany Rye* [1857]. **The Bible in Spain* [1843]. **Wild Wales.* London: John Murray. 1896–.

George Borrow and His Circle. By Clement King Shorter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1913. *In the Footsteps of Borrow and Fitzgerald.* By Morley Adams. London: Jarrold & Sons. 1915.

Essays in Birrell's *Res Judicatæ* and Saintbury's *Essays in English Literature.*

Note, in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and in the romances of Hawthorne (see VIII. and A. above), the union of local colour with the element of mystery or horror.

George Macdonald (Scotland).

**Sir Gibbie* [1879]. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. (No. 678 of Everyman's Library.)

Mrs. Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (English provincial life).

*Ruth; *Phyllis; *Cranford;* etc. See A. above.

Note that George Eliot's early "novels of memory" (*Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, Silas Marner*) are also strongly provincial in their realism. Trollope's Barchester Novels and Mrs. Oliphant's *Chronicles of Carlingford* are almost equally regional. See A. above. Note also, among reprints of the early (Irish) novels of Trollope, *The Macdermots of Ballycloran.* London: Ward, Locke & Co.

Richard Doddridge Blackmore (Devonshire).

**Lorna Doone; a romance of Exmoor.* **Springhaven.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. (Nos. 304 and 350 of Everyman's Library.)

Thomas Hardy ("Wessex").

Under the Greenwood Tree [1872]. *Far From the Madding Crowd* [1874]. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* [1886]. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* [1872–3]. *The Woodlanders* [1887]. *The Return of the Native* [1878]. *The Well-Beloved* [1897]. *Tess of the D'Urbevilles* [1891]. *Jude the Obscure* [1895]. New York: Harper & Bros.

Thomas Hardy. By Harold Child. New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1916. (Writers of the Day.) *A Bibliography of the Works of Thomas Hardy, 1865–1915.* By A. P. Webb. London: F. Hollings. 1916. *The Wessex of Romance.* By Wilkinson Sherren. New and revised edition. London: Chapman & Hall. 1908. (Bibliography, pp. 286–95.) *George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.* By Lina Wright Berle. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. 1917.

"Mark Twain" (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) (The Middle West).

Adventures of Tom Sawyer [1876]. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* [1885]. *Pudd'nhead Wilson* [1894]. *The Writings of Mark Twain,* Author's National Edition. New York: Harper & Bros. 1915.

Mark Twain. By Archibald Henderson. London: Duckworth & Co. 1911. *My Mark*

Twain; reminiscences and criticisms. By W. D. Howells. New York: Harper & Bros. 1910.

Note also the specialized treatments of particular sections of North America by innumerable novelists of various degrees of distinction, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, George Washington Cable, Mary Noailles Murfee, Hamlin Garland, Alice Brown, Gertrude Atherton, Mary Austin, Norman Duncan, Owen Wister, Jack London, Rex Beach, Stewart Edward White, James Lane Allen, William Allen White, John Fox, jr., and Gilbert Parker. A majority of the novels of William Dean Howells show him to be of this school of localists, as his *Criticism and Fiction* shows him to be its chief sponsor.

J. M. Barrie (Scottish Life and Character).

The Little Minister [1891]. *Sentimental Tommy* [1896]. *Tommy and Grizel* [1900]. In *Works,* Author's Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1901–03. 11 vols.

Rudyard Kipling (India).

Kim [1901]. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.

Rudyard Kipling. By John Palmer. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1915. (Writers of the Day.)

Joseph Conrad (Malayan Archipelago).

Almayer's Folly [1895]. *An Outcast of the Islands* [sequel, 1896]. *Lord Jim* [1900]. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. (Deep Sea Edition.)

See, for an accurate and nearly complete short

bibliography of Conrad's principal writings as published in England and America, pp. 121–24 *of Joseph Conrad,* by Hugh Walpole (New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1916. Writers of the Day).

See XI. below.

Of the great number of other specialized regional novelists, the following may be mentioned: Sabine Baring-Gould (Devon); "Katharine Tynan" (Mrs. Katharine Tynan Hinkson) and Jane Barlow (Ireland); "G. A. Birmingham" (Ireland); William Clark Russell and William Wymark Jacobs (sailors and the sea); Israel Zangwill (the Ghetto); Thomas Alexander Browne (Australia); Sir Hugh Clifford (Malay Archipelago); and Archibald Marshall (British provincial gentry). The most important direct influence of Hardy's Wessex Novels appears in the works of Eden Phillpotts (*Children of the Mist, Sons of the Morning, The Harbor, The Thief of Virtue, Widecombe Fair,* etc.) and in those of John Trevena (see especially his moorland trilogy, *Furze, Heather,* and *Granite;* with epilogue, *Gorse.* New York: Moffat, Yard & Co. 1912–). See also, among very recent novels, *Sussex Gorse,* by Sheila Kaye-Smith. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1916).

XI. A supplementary selection of striking developments in naturalism, impressionism, æstheticism, the scientific spirit, Continental influence, etc., 1880–1918.

William Morris.

The Roots of the Mountains [1890]. London: Longman. *The Story of the Glittering Plain* [1890]. London: Longman. *The Wood Beyond the World* [1895]. London: Longman. *The Well at the World's End* [1896]. London: Longman. *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* [1897]. London: Longman. *The Sundering Flood* [1898]. London: Longman.

(Essays in Gothic and mediæval romance; prose poems characterized by sensuous beauty of style and substance.)

"Fiona Macleod" (William Sharp).

Pharais: a Romance of the Isles [1894]. *The Mountain Lovers* [1895]. *Green Fire* [1896]. *Silence Farm* [1899; published under his own name]. In *Collected Works.* London: Heinemann. 7 vols. 1911.

(Fantasies akin to those of Morris, but characterized also by a unique blend of Celtic mysticism and quite modern realism.)

George Moore.

A Modern Lover [1883]. London: Walter Scott. *A Mummer's Wife* [1884]. New York: Brentano's. *A Drama in Muslin* [1888]. London: Vizetelly. Out of print. *Esther Waters* [1894]. London: Walter Scott. *Evelyn Innes* [1898]. New York: Appleton. *Sister Teresa* [1901]. New York: Appleton.

(A development of naturalistic realism culminating in Esther Waters, and tending thereafter to become æsthetic and debilitated.)

An interesting essay on Moore is that in G. K. Chesterton's *Heretics* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1905). See also *The Æstheticism of George Moore* in Stuart P. Sherman's *Main Tendencies in Contemporary Literature* (New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1917).

Oscar Wilde.

The Picture of Dorian Gray [1891]. London: Ward & Locke. Also in *Works*, limited edition, Methuen, 1907–9.

(A brilliant expression of Wilde's own tragic perversity.)

Theodore Watts-Dunton.

Aylwin [1898; written about 1885]. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

(The expression of an æsthete's conception of immortality, and a notable embodiment of the Late Victorian æsthetic movement.)

Mrs. J. Humphry Ward.

Robert Elsmere [1888]. New York: Macmillan.

(A study of the decay of orthodoxy within the Church.)

Robert Louis Stevenson.

The Merry Men [1887]. *The Strange Cæse of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* [1886]. In 1 vol., New York: Scribner.

(Two remarkable examples of expansion of the short-story into the modern novella.)

Stephen Crane.

The Red Badge of Courage [1895]. New

York: Appleton. New edition, with Preface by Arthur Guy Empey, 1917.

(A great and perfect piece of realistic impressionism, dealing with one isolated phase of the American Civil War.)

William Hurrell Mallock.

The New Republic: Culture, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country House [1877]. New York: Scribner. *The New Paul and Virginia: Positivism on an Island* [1878]. New York: Scribner. *The Individualist* [1899]. London: Chapman & Hall.

(Shrewd and diverting satires on contemporary movements in science, politics, philosophy, and social life.)

Ambrose Bierce.

The Monk and the Hangman's Daughter [1911; written about 1890]. New York: Neale Publishing Co. (Vol. 6 of Collected Works.)

(A romantic fantasia quite unspoiled by its satiric purpose.)

"Mark Twain" (Samuel Langhorne Clemens).

The Mysterious Stranger. New York: Harper & Bros. 1916 [posthumous].

(Mark Twain's one expression in fiction of the misanthropic pessimism which appears to have been his life-long philosophy.)

Frank Norris.

McTeague: a Story of San Francisco [1899]. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. *The Octopus: a Story of California* [1901]. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.

(Pictures of economic conditions and histories of class struggles; among the first American novels to show the transition to modern naturalism from the earlier sentimentalism.)

Olive Schreiner.

The Story of an African Farm [1883]. Boston: Little, Brown. *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* [1897]. Boston: Little, Brown.

(Powerful economic and sociologic tracts in the form of fiction.)

W. H. Hudson.

The Purple Land [1885]. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. *Green Mansions* [1904]. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1916. *A Crystal Age* [1887]. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

(Stories that combine richness of imagination with a delicate precision of style hardly seen before in English. *A Crystal Age* is a modern variation of the Utopian romance; *The Purple Land* and *Green Mansions* are, in part, sumptuous landscapes of South America.)

Leonard Merrick.

Cynthia [1896]. London: Chatto & Windus. *The Worldlings* [1900]. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. *Conrad in Quest of his Youth* [1903]. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. *The House of Lynch* [1907]. New York: McClure. *The Position of Peggy Harper* [1911]. New York: Mitchell Kennerley.

(An artist's stories of the artistic temperament in various manifestations; delicately ironic realism, the method slight, but the sense probing.)

William Somerset Maugham.

Liza of Lambeth [1897]. London: Fisher Unwin. *The Hero* [1901]. London: Hutchinson. *The Merry-Go-Round* [1904]. London: Heinemann.

(As uncompromising an exhibition of "murky" realism as can be found in English. *Liza of Lambeth* has a noticeable resemblance to Moore's *Esther Waters.*)

Jack London.

The Call of the Wild [1903]. New York: Macmillan. *The Sea-Wolf* [1904]. New York: Macmillan.

(Perhaps the best American examples of modern impressionistic realism in treatment of the primitive struggle for survival.)

Joseph Conrad.

The Nigger of the "Narcissus" [1897]. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. (as *"Children of the Sea,"* without the original preface). New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. (under original title, with the preface restored). 1914. *Heart of Darkness* [1902]. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co (in *Youth*). *Typhoon* [1903]. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.

(Supreme examples of modern unity in workmanship, secured by impressionistic treatment in works of length approaching that of the novel.)

Nostromo: a Tale of the Seaboard [1904]. New York: Harper & Bros. (A tremendous pageant of material interests, epitomizing mod-

ern life in a romantic story of heroic dimensions, set in a South American republic.)

Under Western Eyes [1911]. New York: Harper & Bros. *The Secret Agent* [1907]. New York: Harper & Bros. (Two novels of the revolutionary and anarchistic spirit, the first-named written in the spirit of Dostoevsky.)

All of Conrad's novels and tales are published in a uniform edition by Doubleday, Page & Co. (New York.)

See *Joseph Conrad,* by Hugh Walpole (New York: Henry Holt and Co. Writers of the Day). There is a valuable essay on Conrad in *A Book of Prefaces,* by H. L. Mencken (New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1917). Note also *A Personal Record,* by Joseph Conrad (New York: Harper & Bros. 1912), and the Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus."* See C. under X. above.

Herbert George Wells.

Tono-Bungay [1909]. New York: Duffield & Co. *The New Machiavelli* [1910]. New York: Duffield & Co.

(Expressions, the one in terms of commerce and science, the other in terms of political life, of a typically modern conflict between the will of the individual and the will of society.)

See *H. G. Wells,* by J. D. Beresford (New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1915. Writers of the Day).

See also VI. above.

Hilaire Belloc.

Mr. Clutterbuck's Election [1908]. London: Nash. *A Change in the Cabinet* [1909]. London: Methuen. *Pongo and the Bull* [1910]. London: Constable.

(Deft satires of political and social tendencies in contemporary life, by an observer who distrusts both the democratic tendency as it exists and the conservatism which opposes it.)

The Girondin [1911]. London: Nelson. (The same attitude expressed in a powerful historical novel.)

"Maarten Maartens."

God's Fool: a Koopstad Story [1892]. New York: Appleton.

(An odd and striking study of abnormality, with a sociologic and humanitarian bias.)

Edith Wharton.

Ethan Frome [1911]. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. *Madame de Treymes* [1907]. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

(Two noteworthy American employments of the novella form as practised by Henry James; cf. his *Spoils of Poynton.*)

The House of Mirth [1905]. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

(A longer work with the same unity of impression.)

See, for *The Valley of Decision,* IX. above.

Edward Frederick Benson.

Dodo: a Detail of To-Day [1893]. New

York: Appleton. *Mammon & Co.* [1899]. New York: Appleton.

(Satiric descriptions of frothy smart society.)

Limitations [1896]. New York: Harper & Bros. *The Challoners* [1904]. London: Heinemann.

(More serious accounts of the creative or poetic temper in its clash with the static elements of society.)

Enoch Arnold Bennett.

The Old Wives' Tale [1908]. New York: Doran. New edition with Preface by author, 1911. *Clayhanger* [1910]. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

(Minute and exhaustive realism applied to industrial life in the north of England, in a successful effort to prove that nothing is commonplace. The first-named is the one great piece of recent realism in English which successfully combines the Early Victorian largeness with Gallic nicety of design and finish.)

See *Arnold Bennett*, by F. J. Harvey Darton. New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1916.

Robert Hugh Benson.

The Sentimentalists [1906]. New York: Benziger. *The Necromancers* [1909]. St. Louis: Herder. *A Winnowing* [1910]. St. Louis: Herder.

(Three of several novels in which the author attempts to apply Roman Catholicism as a solvent to a succession of intricate individual problems of conduct and thought.)

John Galsworthy.

The Man of Property [1906]. New York: Putnam. *The Country House* [1907]. New York: Putnam. *Fraternity* [1909]. New York: Putnam. *The Patrician* [1911]. New York: Scribner.

(Tragi-comedies of individual and class limitations, written with an unique formal exquisiteness. Note especially the perfection of design in each chapter considered as a separate unit.)

John Galsworthy. By Sheila Kaye-Smith. New York: Henry Holt and Co. (Writers of the Day.)

Ford Madox Hueffer.

An English Girl [1907]. London: Methuen. *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* [1911]. London: Constable.

(Dexterous satires of modern materialism, by an author to whom the restraint of art seems the one possible guide to fine living.)

Max Beerbohm.

Zuleika Dobson; or, an Oxford Love Story [1911]. New York: Lane. Also No. 50 of the Modern Library, with introduction by Francis Hackett (New York: Boni & Liveright).

Morley Roberts.

In Low Relief [1890]. New York: Appleton. *A Son of Empire* [1899]. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. *The Colossus* [1899]. New York: Harper & Bros. *Immortal Youth* [1902]. London: Hutchinson.

(The first- and last-named are novels of the artist; the others, novels of empire dealing with elemental forces in human nature. The writer's works are fairly well represented by these two groups.)

Theodore Dreiser.

Sister Carrie [1900]. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. [Suppressed.] New edition: Harper, 1912. *Jennie Gerhardt* [1911]. New York: Harper & Bros. *The Titan* [1914]. New York: John Lane Company.

(Embodiments of a naturalism akin to that of Moore's *Esther Waters.* For two opposed estimates, see *Theodore Dreiser* in *A Book of Prefaces,* by H. L. Mencken (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917) and *The Naturalism of Theodore Dreiser* in *Main Tendencies in Contemporary Literature,* by Stuart P. Sherman (New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1917.)

Hugh Walpole.

The Dark Forest [1916]. New York: Doran.

(A sombre and profoundly imaginative treatment of Russian character and temperament interpreted through a Galician campaign of the Great War.)

James Branch Cabell.

The Soul of Melicent [1913]. New York: Stokes.

(A romance made of the authentic essence of *Aucassin and Nicolette,* but replacing the mediæval naïveté with an extremely delicate conscious care, and illuminating realities of life and love that do not change.)

The Cords of Vanity [1908]. Doubleday, Page & Co. Out of print. *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* [1915]. New York: McBride. *The Cream of the Jest* [1917]. New York: McBride.

(Quizzical but searching studies of the same realities in their relation to modern environment).

Ethel Sidgwick.

The Accolade [1915]. Boston: Small, Maynard. *Hatchways* [1916]. Boston: Small, Maynard.

(Firm and delicate high comedy; the touch of Jane Austen applied, with more than her depth and sincerity, to the country aristocracy of contemporary England.)

Frank Swinnerton.

Nocturne [1918]. New York: Doran.

(Except for one minor flaw, this is a consummate example of the novella form of *The Spoils of Poynton, Ethan Frome,* etc. In unity and harmony, restriction of the number of characters and scenes, and the disinterestedness of its acceptance of life, it typifies the modern crystallization of a new form of fiction, halfway between the novel and the short-story, and combining the formal merits of both.)

Joseph Hergesheimer.

The Three Black Pennys [1917]. *Gold and Iron* [three stories; 1918]. *Java Head* [1919]. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

(Two novels and a volume of short stories

among the few pieces of recent American or English fiction which, in both thought and workmanship, challenge judgment by French standards.)

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